

JANAMSAKHI TRADITION

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
ਸਤਿਸ੍ਰੀਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀਸਾਇ ॥ ਜਨਮਸਾਖੀ
ਸ੍ਰੀਗੁਰਨਾਨਕਸਾਹਿਬੀ ॥ ਗੁਰਨਾਨਕਸਾਹਿਬੀ
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ਓ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਨਾਨਕਸਾਹਿਬਾਨੁਲਹਿਓ ॥ ॐਨਾਨਾ

DR. KIRPAL SINGH

Janamsakhi Tradition
- An Analytical Study -

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Edited by
PRITHIPAL SINGH KAPUR



Singh Brothers
Amritsar

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Preface

With the Guru's Grace knowledge is analysed

—Guru Nanak (GG 1329)

The *Janamsakhi* literature as such relates exclusively to the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. The spectrum of this genre of literature has several strands. It elucidates mystic concepts of spiritual elevation, provides the earliest exegesis of the hymns of Guru Nanak and illustrates the teachings of Guru Nanak by narrating interesting anecdotes. The most significant aspect of the *Janamsakhi* literature is that it has preserved the tradition of Guru Nanak's life that became the primary source of information for all the writings on Guru Nanak. Of late the historical validity of this material has been called to question in the name of methodology. I, therefore, propose to dilate on this aspect in the first instance.

According to R.G. Collingwood, the author of *The Idea of History* (Pages 240-43), "the historian must in two ways go beyond what his authorities tell him. One is critical way and this is what Bradley has attempted to analyse. The other is the constructive way. Of this he has said nothing, and to this now, I propose to return. I described constructive history as interpolating, between the statements borrowed from our authorities; other statements simply by them. Thus, our authorities tell us that on one day Caesar was in Rome and a later day in Gaul, they tell us nothing about the journey from one place to other, but we interpolate this with a perfect good conscience."

"This act of interpolation has two significant characteristics. First, it is in no way arbitrary or merely fanciful; it is necessary in Kantian language *a priori*.... But if our construction involves nothing that is not necessitated by the evidence, it is legitimate historical construction of a kind without which there can be no history at all."

"Secondly what is in this way inferred, is essentially something imagined... That is already an example of historical thinking; and it is not otherwise that we find ourselves obliged to imagine Caesar

as having travelled from Rome to Gaul when we are told that he was in these different places at these successive times..."

"...That the Historian must use his imagination in a common place, to quote Macaulay's *Essay on History*, a perfect historian must possess an imagination sufficiently powerful to make his narrative effective and picturesque." Commenting on it Collingwood writes, "but this is to underestimate the part played by the historical imagination which is properly not ornamental but structural. Without it the historian would have no narrative to adorn." "The imagination that 'blind but indispensable faculty', without which, as Kant has shown, we could never perceive the world around us, is indispensable in the same way to history : it is this which operating not capriciously or fancy but in a *priori* form, does the entire work of historical construction." (p. 241)

At another place Collingwood states, "here and equally in all other kinds of art, a priori imagination is at work. Its other familiar functions what may be called the perceptual imagination supplementing and consolidating the data of perception."

But historical imagination is different. For this; following three conditions are essential :

1. Historian's picture must be localized in space and time.
2. "All history must be consistent with itself ... there is only one historical world, and everything in it must stand in some relation to everything else, even if relation is only topographical and chronological.
3. "It is of utmost importance that historian's picture stands in a peculiar relation to something called evidence." (p. 246)

It has been accepted that history is a science as well as an art, 'no more no less'.

In every work of art some kind of imagination is always involved. So is the case with the *Janamsakhis*. The *Janamsakhi* writers were men of faith with desire for spiritual pursuits. About Guru Nanak's life, they had before them authentic data in two forms. One was the *Bani* of Guru Nanak as enshrined in the *Adi Granth*, the Sikh scripture, compiled by Guru Arjan Dev, the Fifth Guru. Guru Arjan had rejected works attributed to Guru Nanak like *Nasihah Nama*, *Pransangli* etc. etc. It is an established fact that all the extant *Janamsakhis* came to be written after the compilation of the

Adi Granth in 1604 AD. A large number of verses of Guru Nanak quoted in the *Janamsakhis* could not be available before 1604 AD. As a source, these verses of the Guru, found in *Adi Granth* in the form of dialogues with the persons of different denominations like Muslim divines, Hindu men of learning (*Pandits*), *Sidhas*, *Yogis*, *Brahmins*, *Qazis*, *Shaikhs*, traders, peasants etc. etc. became basic to the compilation of the *Janamsakhis*.

The second important datum available to the *Janamsakhi* writers was the tradition of Guru Nanak as incorporated in the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas (died 1637 AD). Bhai Gurdas was a very close companion of Baba Buddha who had lived during the life-time of Guru Nanak, had embraced Sikh faith and was witness to the making of the traditions regarding the founder of Sikhism. Moreover, his close association with the Guru's family enabled him to know more about the anecdotes relating to the Guru's travels within India and abroad. Bhai Gurdas was the nephew of Guru Amardas, the third Sikh Guru, he served the fourth Guru as a missionary and was honoured by Guru Arjan when he was asked to act as scribe for the compilation of the *Adi Granth*. As a matter of fact, he possessed unimpeachable credentials to record the traditions of Guru Nanak. His first *Var* delineating the life of Guru Nanak can be called anchor sheet of most of the *Janamsakhis* which more or less remain elucidation, illustration and explanation of the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas.

The *Janamsakhi* writers were not content with the pithy and sketchy material as available in the first *Var*. They wanted more details for the life of the founder of Sikhism. Consequently, they used this material to elucidate the narration as much as they could. For instance Bhai Gurdas has stated, "*Baba Gaya Tirathin Tirath Purb Sabe Phir Dekhey*" viz Guru Nanak visited all the places of Hindu pilgrimages. This line was expanded to include several *Sakhis* like Guru Nanak's visit to Kurukshetra, Haridwar, Prayag, Benaras, Jagannath Puri etc. etc. The details were filled from the verses of Guru Nanak which were taken as dialogues with the learned *Pandas* of Benaras, the priests performing *Aarti* at Jagannath Puri, Guru's hymns on death ceremonies of Hindus at Budh Gaya etc. etc. Some *Janamsakhi* writers who ventured to visit the places associated with Guru Nanak added in their own accounts of local traditions as well. Miharban appears to have visited some such places as his description

of a few places is very lucid (see his *Sakhi* of Guru's visit to Ujjain). The *Sakhis* of the Guru's visit to Sumer (Kailash mountain) and his dialogue with *Siddhas*, his visit to Mecca and Baghdad and his discussions with Muslim divines etc. are based on the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas. Almost all the *Sakhis* with the exception of a few have been constructed on the basis of historical data as referred to above and with historical imagination of one form or the other. Therefore, most of the anecdotes recorded in the *Janamsakhis* fall within the orbit of history. In my opinion it will be fallacious to call them by any other name.

It is a very pertinent question as to why western scholars could not appreciate the Sikh tradition and properly assess the *Janamsakhis*. Unfortunately, for them; Ernest Trump became the sole guide for the study of entire Sikh literature. The most popular Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* which was compiled by a follower of Baba Hindal, a dissenter, was translated into English by Dr. Trump. It claimed to be an eye-witness account which it was not. Bhai Bala's name does not appear in any of the other *Janamsakhis*. Dr. Trump also translated the *Puratan* or *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*. Most of the western scholars base their studies on both *Puratan* and Bala traditions. But they could not reach the originals as they were not proficient in Gurumukhi script and could hardly delve deep into the entire text of *Janamsakhis* or verses of Guru Nanak. Secondly these scholars did not care to study the contemporary conditions and travel routes of those times by applying historical imagination which is so essential for the construction of every historical narrative. It is in this context that Dr. McLeod hastened to conclude that there is no record of the Guru's visit to Ceylon or Mecca. He does not seem to have cast a critical look at the conditions prevalent in Ceylon and South India during 14th and 15th centuries. Tamil Kings from South India had been ruling Ceylon upto 13th century. Thousands of Tamils travelled from Nagapatnam to Madakulapa modern Batticaloa district on the eastern coast of Ceylon which is associated with the *Ramayana*. I toured the whole district and found there overwhelming influence of Indian culture visible. When Guru Nanak visited South India it was not unlikely for him to visit Ceylon. Only balanced analysis could help arrive at such a conclusion.

A source of medieval history may not be rejected because it contains miracles. Miracles have remained an integral part of all

types of spiritual exercises. Religious books like *Vedas*, Buddhist texts, *Bible*, *Quran*, all contain miraculous accounts. Miracles also find mention in the *Adi Granth*, but only as references. The people in medieval ages believed in miracles and considered them as an index of spiritual elevation. Therefore, the miracles in the *Janamsakhis* should not be rejected or decried outright, rather their historical settings need to be studied.

I started the study of *Janamsakhi* tradition in 1966 AD at the Punjabi University, Patiala as a major project. I travelled to various places from Nanakmatta (Uttaranchal) to Colombo in Ceylon in pursuit of my researches tracing the old memorial Gurdwaras built in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit and old routes prevalent during the early sixteenth century. All this material was verified and compared with the written tradition of Guru Nanak viz the *Janamsakhis* in order to decipher the historicity of the tradition of Guru Nanak. Attempts were also made to collect material (from the places which I could not visit) through knowledgeable persons who were interested in such studies.

My studies lead me to conclude that the *Janamsakhis* shall ever remain the most important source of information on Guru Nanak if we study them carefully and intensively. Most of the Muslim saints whom Guru Nanak is said to have met and find mention in *Janamsakhi* Miharban Part II were contemporaries of Guru Nanak. Their names are found in *Tazkara-i-Sufia-i-Punjab*, recently published in Karachi (Pakistan). I have tried to decipher some proper names mentioned in the *Janamsakhis*. A glossary of such names has been given in Appendix I.

For the translation of hymns of Guru Nanak quoted in this book, I have mostly depended on G.S. Talib's translation of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* published by Punjabi University, Patiala.

It is my pleasant duty to acknowledge the active help and support that I received; during the course of my researches on this project, from Professor Prithipal Singh Kapur, former Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, who is my nephew as well as student. Since the publication of my work *Janamsakhi Parampara*, he has been persuading me to carry forward my studies on the *Janamsakhis* and bring it out in English. Initially, I remained reticent. Later on I made up my mind and started with translation of a portion of *Janamsakhi Parampara*, but could not go

ahead. When Professor Prithipal Singh Kapur undertook an assignment as Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* with the Punjabi University, Patiala, he persuaded his colleague in the Deptt., Dr. Dharm Singh to undertake the arduous task of translation of some of the important portions of *Janamsakhi Parampara*. Dr. Dharm Singh did this task with devotion and competence. This became the basic draft on which I re-worked to carry forward my studies on the *Janamsakhis*. Professor Prithipal Singh Kapur remained associated with the progress of the work at every stage. He edited it very minutely and diligently, and has also appended a scholarly introduction. I express my profound sense of gratitude to both of them.

Dr. S.P. Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar has been taking keen interest in this project since the day I mentioned it to him. As the things started taking shape, he wanted me to expedite it. I owe him my sincere thanks. My thanks are also due to my teacher late Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala, who initially entrusted me this arduous job with full faith and confidence.

Last but not the least, I am thankful to my wife, Joginder Kaur who has always been a great source of help to me during my life-time pursuit of researches on Sikh history. Thanks are also due to Mr. Gursagar Singh of Singh Brothers, Amritsar who readily agreed to bring out the work without any delay and in a befitting form.

1288/Sector-15B,
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May 7, 2003

Kirpal Singh

Introduction

Janamsakhi literature; produced essentially to preserve the tradition of Guru Nanak, defies classification. The *Janamsakhis* are neither hagiographies¹ nor biographies. In fact it is implicit within the word *Janamsakhi* that these are no more than compilations of anecdotes about the life of Guru Nanak. At best they can be called "anthologies of the stories told of his life."² One is sometimes inclined to place them at par with the four gospels, appearing at the beginning of the New Testament. The Sikh multitude revered the *Janamsakhi* as "good news" (*Sakhis*)³ of Guru Nanak. Like the four 'Gospels', the various *Janamsakhis* were initially not looked upon as rivals of each other but as parallel versions of the anecdotes concerning the life of Guru Nanak and were not written primarily in the interest of history in the modern sense of the word. On the other hand, literature was produced to foster the faith of the Sikhs in Guru Nanak and his teachings. But it is interesting to discern; after careful appraisal of the *Janamsakhis* that compilers of these *Janamsakhis* strove hard to lend authenticity and historical credibility to the anecdotes related by them by inserting quotations from the hymns of Guru Nanak (and his successors) enshrined in the *Guru Granth* (whose authenticity remains unimpaired) or even narrating the anecdotes as eye-witness accounts. Therefore it can be surmised that the *Janamsakhis* are based upon facts but they were written from the standpoint of 'faith'. Therefore any antithesis, presented between Nanak of faith⁴ and Nanak of history shall always remain misleading.⁵

The rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab in the last three

1. "Life and Critical Study of Lives of Saints", see *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, p. 583 (1997).

2. *Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia*, p. 1291 (2001).

3. "Gospel denotes primarily the 'good news' of Christianity," see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, p. 536 (1957 edition).

4. Some prefer to address Nanak of faith as Nanak Nirankari.

5. W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p. 68, Oxford University Press, 1968.

decades of eighteenth century aroused interest in the history of the Sikhs as people; who began to be looked upon as serious contenders for power in the north west of India. But emergence of Sikhism 'as a new system of religion' was hardly noticed by these writers. They only familiarised themselves with Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh faith as 'a man of more than common genius' who successfully contended with the furious bigotry of Muslims and the deep-rooted superstition of Hindus."⁶ But the process of historical investigation of Sikh literature particularly the *Janamsakhis* started with the discovery and translation of *Puratan Janamsakhi* which Ernest Trump described as "fountain from which all the others (*Janamsakhis*) have been drawn largely."⁷ However, Karam Singh was the first among the Sikh scholars who took to serious (sceptic in the modern terminology) historical scrutiny of Bala *Janamsakhi* to prove that it was a *Hindali* version of Guru Nanak's tradition and boldly published his findings in his famous book *Katak Ke Visakh* in 1908. He earned the ire of 'traditionalists' and his book was withdrawn from sale. But Karam Singh had conclusively proved that Bala *Janamsakhi* was full of interpolations and had been written to extol Hindal Niranjania.⁸ Earlier to this, in 1904 A.D., Sewa Ram Singh the first biographer of Guru Nanak had stated in preface to his book *A Critical Study of the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Dev*: "materials at our disposal are very chaotic and misleading" and of the numerous versions of Bala *Janamsakhi*, "none appears to be quite authentic."⁹ Thereafter, M.A. Macauliffe scanned all the then extant versions of *Janamsakhis* and found therein fictitious narrations. He gave preference to the *Puratan* version because as he put it; "it

6. J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in Western Scholarship*, p. 4, I.I.A.S., Shimla, 1992.

7. Ernest Trump, *The Adi Granth*, II, reprint, New Delhi, 1970.

8. Hindal was a devotee of Guru Amar Das who became prominent during the pontificate of Guru Ram Das. For his devotion and dedicated service he was blessed by the Guru as *Masand* (a preacher, depury). He settled in his native village Jandiala (Amritsar) and made many disciples who came to be called Hindalis or Niranjania (the insulated ones). After his death, his son deviated from the Guru's path and his few followers became an heretic sect. It is believed that it was during the period of Bidhi Chand that those of his followers who stuck to him compiled a *Granth* and a *Janamsakhi* with a view to extol Hindal and denigrate the founder Sikh Guru. Macauliffe, *The Sikhs*, Vol. I (XXXI), Amritsar, 2000, see also Karam Singh, *Katak ke Visakh* (Punjabi), 131, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, n.d.

9. Sewa Ram Singh, *The Divine Master*, edited by Prithipal Singh Kapur, XII, ABS Publications, Jalandhar, 1988.

contains much less mythological matter than any other Gurmukhi life of the Guru and is a much more rational, consistent and satisfactory narrative... It is the product of legend and tradition which have been thought to be more trustworthy."¹⁰ He also pointed out that the details of all the then current *Janamsakhis* appeared to be simply settings for the verses and sayings of Guru Nanak by the followers who devised the framework of a biography to exhibit them to the populace.¹¹ In fact he likened them to the four Gospels; perhaps because of the fact that the early Christian church accepted the four gospels as authentic and the question of their reliability was not raised for many centuries. It is interesting to note that Gospel of John claims to be work of an eye-witness¹² like the Bala *Janamsakhi*. Early attempts to delve deep into the *Janamsakhi* tradition and assess its historical authenticity have been characterised as rationalistic with a view to assert that miracles associated with the name of Guru Nanak were not miraculous at all but events misinterpreted by the devotees.¹³ Khazan Singh's *History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion* which appeared in 1914, gave more attention to examination of source material; then available to him. Although Khazan Singh was inclined to give credence to the Bala *Janamsakhi* but he took full cognizance of the heretical Hindali interpolations. He comes to the conclusion that *Janamsakhis* that "we possess are not free from defects" and advises a careful study before their being accepted as source materials.¹⁴

The spread of western education and on-set of renaissance among the Sikhs in the early parts of twentieth century; led to the quest for what can now be termed as empirical and contemporary historical evidence. In the process, the Guru's own compositions enshrined in the *Guru Granth* came to be accepted as impeccable contemporary account. Here the only question that remained was that of identifying the historical references and their interpretation. The first and the eleventh *vars* of Bhai Gurdas (who wrote these only

10. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, XXXVII Vol. I, 2000 (Reprint).

11. *Ibid.*, *op.cit.*

12. Humphrey Carpenter, *Jesus*, p. 16, Oxford University Press, 1980.

13. Kartar Singh argues at length that miracles remain a part of all religious systems and they need to be understood in the light of available evidence. See Kartar Singh, *Guru Nanak Dev—Life and Teachings*, Appendix B, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, n.d.

14. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, Part I, pp. 20-21, Lahore 1914.

a little over sixty years after the death of Guru Nanak) contain only cryptic account of the life of Guru Nanak which some scholars like to take as authentic¹⁵ while others describe the same as “very brief and least satisfactory.”¹⁶ Bhai Gurdas’s reference to Guru Nanak’s visit to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad has been corroborated by the discovery of an inscription at Baghdad in 1918 but various versions of the translations of this inscription (original supposed be in Arabic, Turkish, Ottoman Turkish or an admixture of Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages) have come to the fore. It is interesting to note that except one, any of these translations has not excluded the mention of Baba Nanak therein.¹⁷ The discovery of another inscription in the archaeological museum, Anuradhpura (Sri Lanka) has lent new dimensions to the existence of evidence pertaining the anecdote recorded in the *Janamsakhis* regarding Guru Nanak’s visit to Sri Lanka.¹⁸ All in all, the *Janamsakhis* remain with us the most important as well as most voluminous sources of information about Guru Nanak. There is hardly any doubt that a very strong oral tradition of Guru Nanak remained current among the people of the places visited by the Guru in and outside India. The *Janamsakhi* tradition provides us with numerous anecdotes that describe the travels of Guru Nanak to far off places and his discourses with the learned men of different faiths, that go to prove that of all the world prophets, Guru Nanak was the most travelled person and this speaks volumes for his zeal for dissemination of his divine doctrine within India and in countries thousands of miles away from his homeland.¹⁹ These are the factors that have kept the interest of not only the historians but the literati also, focussed on the *Janamsakhis*. This led to the un-earthing of numerous versions of *Janamsakhis* and some apocryphal literature on this pattern. The publication of Miharban’s

15. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 301, Oxford University Press, 1981.

16. W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p. 29, Oxford University Press, 1968.

17. Dr. W.L. Menage’s translation of the inscription quoted by McLeod remains inherently weak as Mr. Menage clearly states “I regret I am unable to suggest the correct reading, but *Baba Nanak* seems to me to be excluded.” (see McLeod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion*, p. 132).

18. Saddha Mangala Karuna Ratna, “Guru Nanak and Ceylone” in Harbans Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on Guru Nanak*, 326-27, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975. Also see, Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, 17 (footnote 14), Uncommon Books, New Delhi, 1996.

19. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sources on the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak*, p. 15, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969.

Goshts under the title : *Janamsakhi* Miharban (edited by Kirpal Singh) lent a new dimension to the study of *Janamsakhi* tradition and widened its scope. As we delve deep into the mass of this material, we are inclined to believe and correctly so, that the purpose of compilation of *Janamsakhis* was neither to record history of Guru Nanak nor to provide an exegesis of the *Bani* (hymns) of Guru Nanak. The real motive was to transmit information to the younger generations about the 'wonderful' personality of Guru Nanak and to tell them that Guru Nanak revealed to the world a unique and enlightened faith that preached the doctrine of unity and supremacy of God, True Name (*Nam*) and service (*Daya Dharam*).²⁰ This will bring us to the conclusion that the *Janamsakhis* present a distinct type of religio-legendary literature wherein the ingredients of historical evidence lie embedded deep underneath. This fact needs to be emphasized because the age of Guru Nanak falls within the period of historical light.

The thrust of earliest studies on the *Janamsakhis* was to reach-out to the earliest of the versions. A number of manuscripts were unearthed and published but search could not go beyond the *Puratan* tradition. The manuscript which became the basic document for most renditions that are now current as *Puratan Janamsakhi* was made available by India Office Library to Dr. Ernest Trump when he was working on his translation of the *Adi Granth*.²¹ Subsequently its copies became available in the Punjab also. Bhai Vir Singh the celebrated Sikh scholar attempted to present a standardised version of the same. The first edition of this *Puratan Janamsakhi* was published in 1926. However, the work on historical analysis of the *Janamsakhi* tradition started with Sewa Ram Singh in 1904 (*Study of the Life and Teachings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev*, the Founder of Sikhism) followed by *The Divine Master* (1930) about which it has been rightly said that "The outline of Guru Nanaks' life that emerges from Sewa Ram Singh's sources is clear and plausible."²² This will lead us to conclude that a format for historical investigation of the *Janamsakhis* had been prepared despite the persistence of confusion

20. W.H. McLeod (ed). The B40, *Janamsakhi*, 110, GNDU, Amritsar, 1980, *Early Sikh Tradition*, pp. 240-43, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980.

21. Ernest Trump, *Adi Granth*, II, reprint, New Delhi, 1970.

22. J.S. Grewal, *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition*, p. 62, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1998.

regarding dates where external evidence could be used. As for ascertaining the efficacy of travels, there was scope for surmise based on geographical position of the places visited. The intensive study of the *Janamsakhis* continued along the above lines until 1966; when Dr. Kirpal Singh was entrusted with a major but challenging project, to decipher the historical content in the *Janamsakhi* tradition and Professor Harbans Singh was asked to undertake the arduous task of producing a perceptive biography of Guru Nanak. It is noteworthy that both of these projects were conceived before the publication of Dr. W.H. McLeods', *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* which appeared in 1968. The publication of the works of Dr. Kirpal Singh and Professor Harbans Singh mark the on-set of a new era in study of *Janamsakhi* tradition and historiography of Guru Nanak. For the first time a three pronged approach was applied by Dr. Kirpal Singh to verify the historicity of Guru Nanak's travels which form a major part of the *Janamsakhi* tradition : (a) scrutiny of tradition as per historical situations, (b) identification of shrines raised at various places to commemorate the visits of the Guru, (c) verification of the trade routes of the early sixteenth century. This was perhaps the first rigorous exercise undertaken at an historical analysis of the *Janamsakhi* tradition with the institutional support. The current four traditions were accordingly compared and assessed. Significantly, we find Professor Harbans Singh also applying a similar rigorous methodology while confronting the *Janamsakhi's* tradition as historical sources. He came to the conclusion that "persisting contrariety on incidental details need not affect the essential veracity of Guru Nanak's picture which can be recreated with a fair degree of certainty."²³

Meanwhile fresh developments were taking place in the west that were to have far reaching effect on the complexion of Sikh historiography. It was the time when hordes of Sikhs were migrating to Britain. Jagtar Singh Grewal, a lecturer from Gujranwala Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Ludhiana went to Britain during this very period; not to make a fortune but to pursue studies. He chose to join the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London University. He stayed in Britain for about six years and completed

23. Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 33, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969.

his doctoral work on 'Muslim Rule in India : Assessment of British Historians'. It was his grounding and assiduous work on medieval India that enabled him to bring out his monograph on 'Guru Nanak in History' in the quincentennial year of Guru Nanak's birth (1969). A year earlier another student of the SOAS, Hew McLeod had brought out 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion' (a revised version of his thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy) which according to him; "raised anguish and outrage" among the "more devout and loyal members of the Panth."²⁴ The entry of Grewal and McLeod into the field of Sikh studies set a new trend in Sikh historiography. Grewal always remains cautious and restrained in pronouncing his judgements on matters sensitive. Nonetheless he never hesitates to lay stress on the importance of contemporary accounts, empirical evidence as also modern research methodology. McLeod, on the other hand pronounces loudly that he had to apply 'a certain range of techniques' for a scholarly analysis. His methodology has been carried forward by Pashaura Singh and Harjot Singh Oberoi. All three of them follow the same methodology deftly but with what results? While rejecting most of the anecdotes of tradition recorded in the *Janamsakhis*, the 'Sceptical' historian in McLeod remains unsure about his own conclusions e.g. about the Haridwar visit of Guru Nanak he says "the rejection of the actual incident does not however mean that the Guru was never in Haridwar."²⁵ Similar conclusions are drawn about the Kashmir visit of the Guru. McLeod seems to suggest that the Guru might have been to Haridwar for a pilgrimage like any other Hindu—a contention which cannot find support from any circumstantial evidence. About visits to other Hindu pilgrim centres like Allahabad, Benaras, Jagannath Puri, Rameshwaram and Ujjain, McLeod again states "we cannot however assume that Guru Nanak did not visit any of these places." About Nanakmatta (Gorakhmatta earlier), he also takes the same position viz; "the possibility that the area was visited by Guru Nanak cannot be ruled out completely."²⁶ As for Guru Nanak's visit to Mecca, McLeod prefers to call it 'a possibility but a remote one'.²⁷ The inscription testifying the visit of Guru Nanak

24. W.H. McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism*, pp. 267-68, O.4. Oxford University Press, 2000.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 90, *op.cit.*

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 88, *op.cit.*

27. *Ibid.*, p. 125, *op.cit.*

to Baghdad is rejected on the basis of translation of the inscription and the conclusion of analysis of this tradition provided by W.L. Menage a Reader in Turkish at the School of Oriental and African studies. Again it still remains a 'possibility' but 'unsubstantiated'.²⁸ To our good luck, McLeod refrains from finding fault with Guru Nanak's eye-witness account; *Babur Vani*, of devastation caused by Babur's invasions although he remains fiddling with the evidence to relate it to either of the three different invasions of Babur in 1520, 1524 or 1526.²⁹ In conclusion, McLeod accepts the historical identity of Guru Nanak, his stay at Sultanpur, his employment with Daulat Khan Lodhi; his having received a divine call at Sultanpur and after that undertaking long travels within India and 'perhaps beyond'. He says that it is not possible to determine the extent or pattern of the travels but he accepts that Guru Nanak visited 'more important centres of Hindu and Muslim pilgrimage'. McLeod also examines the events of foundation of Kartarpur on the bank of river Ravi (now in Pakistan) and nomination of Lehna as successor and accepts them as historical facts. The style and methodology adopted for examination of the *Janamsakhi* tradition brings forth two questions : (a) whether the only job of a 'sceptical historian' is to pursue the task in a negative fashion; (b) whether methodology is the be all and end all of historical research. McLeod's students, Pashaura Singh and Harjot Singh Oberoi follow him literally. The former applied McLeod's theory of evolution to the textual study of *Adi Granth* and the later looked at the transformation of *Sanatan* (literally ancient, essentially a word used in *Brahmanical* terminology) Sikh tradition or what he calls 'pluralist tradition' into 'an orderly, pure singular form of Sikhism'.³⁰ Harjot pursued his research at the Australian National University but it carries the imprint of London University School of Oriental and African Studies methodology as it was closely monitored by Hew McLeod. It is noteworthy that Harjot fails to identify and appreciate the first step with regard to demarcation of distinct 'religious boundaries' taken by the founder of Sikhism himself with the nomination of Guru Angad as his successor and his refusal to recognise the Hindu Pantheon in his

28. W.H. McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism*, p. 132, O.4. Oxford University Press, 2000.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 138, *op.cit.*

30. Harjot Singh Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, p. 421, Oxford University Press, 1997.

religious scheme. On the other hand, he says, the process of demarcation of religious boundaries started with a “dramatic change that came about with the rise of the Khalsa in the eighteenth century; sections of the Sikh population now began to push for a distinct and separate religious culture.”³¹ The fallacy of this statement shall be well understood if a reference is made to Mobid’s observations in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* written in the seventeenth century. He says, “To be brief, Nanak’ followers scorn images. Their belief is that all the Gurus are Nanak as has been said above. They do not recite *mantras* of the Hindus and they do not pay respect to their idol temples. They do not count *avatars* for anything. They do not have any attachment to Sanskrit, which the Hindus call the language of angels.”³² Also, a close study of the *Janamsakhis*, sufficiently reveals the anxiety of the compilers to lay stress on the distinct identity and superiority of Nanak’s faith and they frequently bring in the Hindu legendary accounts only to prove their hypothesis. However, the heretical versions like that of the Hindalis played havoc to denigrate the original *Janamsakhi* tradition.³³ This emerging school of Sikh historiographers from the School of Oriental and African studies, London University should have taken these important factors into consideration before characterising all the *Janamsakhis* as hagiographies devoid of historical elements. No doubt Sikh history is only 500 years old, yet the critical or so to say the ‘sceptical historian’ equipped with modern methodology, needs to take into account, the earlier concepts of history as ‘accumulation of records’ and ‘story telling’ besides the dominance of Christian historiography that prevailed throughout the middle ages.

It is in this backdrop that we should define a ‘traditionist’ or a ‘sceptic’ historian, the ‘historical method’ or ‘scholarly method’ as applicable to Sikh historiography. In the early twentieth century; we come across western educated Sikh officers/lawyers and some enthusiasts like Karam Singh imbued with intrinsic zeal for historical investigation, embarking on the path of constructing a reliable but

31. Harjot Singh Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, p. 24, Oxford University Press, 1997.

32. Sikhism and the Sikhs (1645-46) from Mobid, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* (Trans. by Irfan Habib); J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (ed.) *Sikh History from Persian Sources*, p. 66, Tulika, New Delhi 2001.

33. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, p. 13.

objective narrative of Sikh history. It is wrong to presume that these pioneers 'put their trust in tradition' and that the material handed down by tradition was never subjected to 'rigorous scrutiny'. Sewa Ram Singh, Khazan Singh and Karam Singh all ventured to critically analyse the *Janamsakhi* tradition. Karam Singh's anxiety to insist on contemporary documentary evidence is also evident from his work on Banda Bahadur published in 1905.³⁴ In this regard the application of methodology also comes into play to bring forth disagreements. May be, that "every fact requires believable evidence to support" is an ideal position for the 'sceptic historian' but here the word 'believable' will carry relative meaning, connotation and perception for individual historians dealing with facts and evidence. The fixation with McLeod is: 'I cannot possibly (like the traditional historians) call them (*Janamsakhis*) biographies'. But here the question arises whom does McLeod brand 'traditional historians' and which of the 'traditionalist historians' (possibly he means Sikh historians) has insisted or even tried to prove that *Janamsakhis* are biographies of Guru Nanak in the modern sense? The only point to be noted here is that *Janamsakhis* are looked upon as repository of early Sikh tradition that is embedded within the Panth. They are open to scrutiny and historical analysis but every component of the tradition need not be analysed and rejected only to prove a hypothesis.

Also, a scholar from the SOAS, London, J.S. Grewal has extensively worked on almost every period of Sikh history. He started by trying to place Guru Nanak in historical perspective. A glance at the contents of his book *Guru Nanak in History* will bear out the premise. His understanding and analysis grounded in modern methodology is more explicit. He asserts that Guru Nanak was 'an originator and a founder'.³⁵ His work on *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition* (published in 1998) seeks to assess the entire gamut of research work on Sikh tradition. A close reading of this work reveals Grewal's anxiety to define what he calls 'modern methodology.' In the process, he fails to concur with McLeod's theory of evolution and transformation. He finds that 'McLeods' interpretation (*Evolution of the Sikh Community*) had a serious flaw

34. For details see Prithipal Singh Kapur, *Historiography of Banda Singh Bahadur*, as Editor's note in Sohan Singh, *Life and Exploits of Banda Singh Bahadur*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2000.

35. J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, p. 236, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1969.

as 'he made the simplistic assumption that Guru Nanak's mission was the same as that of the Bhaktas'.³⁶ But he looks at the work of McLeod on Sikh tradition (*Janamsakhis*) as representing historical methodology.³⁷ It is strange that Grewal did not come across or he preferred not to take note of Kirpal Singh's important work '*Janamsakhi Prampura*' (first published in 1969) which appeared almost simultaneously with his own work; *Guru Nanak in History* and was preceded by McLeod's *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*. Perhaps, it was due to the fact that work was produced in Punjabi. Kirpal Singh did not undertake the project either to contest the interpretations of McLeod or refute his conclusions. It was pursued independently. In his foreward to the work, Professor Kirpal Singh Narang, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University wrote "the purpose of the project was to critically analyse the *Janamsakhi* tradition with a view to discover the elements of historicity contained therein and more so to present before the people a historical *Janamsakhi*." This challenging task took Kirpal Singh to many places within India and Sri Lanka. And as stated above; Kirpal Singh evolved his own methodology to accomplish the arduous task which is decidedly analytical and is aimed at search for historical content in the Sikh tradition. But Kirpal Singh refrains from becoming negatively 'sceptical'. His work also takes care of the available corroboratory evidence besides ensuring that no inconvenient evidence is suppressed. Consequently, he rejects many an anecdote found in the *Janamsakhis*. He demonstrates full well that the scholars/historians branded as 'traditionalists' (by the scholars avowedly committed to modern historical methodology), are fully conscious of the demands of the modern historical methodology but they are not inclined to subscribe to the negative 'sceptical approach'. This also explains how Jagtar Singh Grewal also a product of School of Oriental and Afro-Asian studies manages to pursue his methodology and at the same time remains conscious about the sensibilities of the faithful without in any way compromising with the results of his research. It is however regretted that Grewal's *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition* could not carry a fuller assessment of the work on Sikh tradition. It appears, he intended only to defend McLeod's

36. J.S. Grewal, *Contesting Interpretations of Sikh Tradition*, p. 125, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1998.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

thesis in his typical style. Therefore, it was left to Dr. Kirpal Singh himself to present before the scholarly world, the findings of his assiduous research as '*Janamsakhi* Tradition : An Analytical Study'.

On my part, I feel honoured for having been entrusted with the onerous and inspiring task of editing this remarkable study of the *Janamsakhi* tradition and appending an introduction thereto. I am sure this study will inspire many a scholar and lead to a more fruitful and objective study of the early Sikh tradition.

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CHAPTER 1

Genesis of the *Janamsakhi* Tradition

The *Janamsakhi* tradition had its origin with attempts to compile popular anecdotes connected with the life of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism. These collections were compiled during the 17-19th centuries in Punjabi language (Gurmukhi script). It is not fair to compare a *Janamsakhi* with biography as a literary genre which is of recent origin wherein attempts are made to portray the important events and influences that shaped the life of an individual from his birth to the last day of his life and also endeavours to assess his/her works and contribution to human life. The *Janamsakhis* cannot be categorised as earliest attempts at preparing biographical accounts of the life of Guru Nanak either. They fall in a different category as regards its form and content because they seek to present the life of the Guru in the form of Platonian dialogues highlighting his teachings through the medium of anecdotes delineating his spiritual greatness.

Alfred Lyall states that the first impulse which brought forth the stories of great men was based on the element of amazement at their marvellous deeds. At that point of time mankind had not developed the critical faculty of discriminating between fact and fiction, as well as right or wrong. People usually accepted as true and authentic whatever was related to them about the deeds of gods or heroes. As such "the hazy atmosphere, marvellous and miraculous obscures the early origin of race and religion clouds the beginning of history."¹ However, this state of affairs did not last long. The concept of authentic history began to emerge slowly out of the sea of fables and gradually things which appeared natural and acceptable to elder generation became incredible or improbable. The awe and

1. Alfred Lyall, *Asiatic Studies, Religious and Social*, Vol. VI, p. 326.

amazement phenomenon was superseded by a taste for an accurate thought and empirical evidence. However "historian's point of view is one of the mankind's more recent acquisitions."²

It is however certain that legends about the great savants and heroes of the past form the earliest source of information. A man who made his mark in a generation and who outdistanced the rest in bravery, piety or some peculiar powers of mind or body became the source and subject of legend among the unlettered. These legends rescued and transmitted to posterity were what could come down to us out of the flood of deep oblivion. Thus, however exaggerated or complicated a legend might be, it was surely based on a kernel of truth. At times that kernel even might seem to be insignificant. To us, sometimes the attending circumstances make the situation look complicated. This can be explained by an example from Indian history. In a part of Rajputana, the *Minas* (an aboriginal tribe) used to worship the pig. When they took a turn towards Islam, they changed their pig into a saint called Father Adam and worshipped the animal as such. When the *Brahmins* came to have influence over them, the pig became identified with the famous Boar, an incarnation of *Vishnu* and was named *Varaha*.³ This led to the development of symbolism. The animal fables of *Aesop* and the *Panch Tantar* stories are landmarks in the symbolic literature. During the medieval period, religion being a dominant force brought a new type of symbolism to indicate the spiritual progress of an individual. *Muntkul Tahir* and *Gita Govinda* can be quoted as fine specimens of this type of literature during the 12th and 13th centuries. Therefore while studying any piece of religious literature and for that matter the *Janamsakhis*, one has to keep in mind the state of contemporary religious literature and its stage of development.

The tradition about Guru Nanak got current when he was still alive. The contemporaries began to talk about his itineraries, his visits to Mecca, Madina and Baghdad, his discourses with the *Pirs* of Uch and *Makhdunes* of Multan, his religious debates with *Gorakhpanthis* and *Pandits* (Hindu wise men) of Kurukshetra and Kashi. With all this, began a process that brought into being, what we now describe as continuing tradition of Guru Nanak.

2. Arnold Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 3.

3. Alfred Lyall, *Asiatic Studies, Religious and Social*, Vol. VI, pp. 50-51.

The Muslims came to India through the north-west and therefore Punjab was the first to bear the brunt of Muslim domination. Guru Nanak himself described the Muslim domination in his *Asa di Var* :

In this age people wear blue and is established the rule of Turks and Pathans.
Each of the four Vedas have expressed *some* truth.
Those studying and expounding them realize what is appropriate action from what is inappropriate
Whoever by practice of love and devotion takes a humble appellation,
Saith Nanak, liberation obtains. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 470

As a result, the tradition of Guru Nanak got influenced by Islamic domination. The miracles of Prophet Jesus are found even in the Holy *Quran*, a fact that makes us believe that miracles remain an essential attribute of a religious leader—*Nabi* or *Auliya*. That is why, we come across the accounts of Muslim *Pirs* and saints replete with portrayal of miracles in the *Janamsakhis*. Among the most widely known books of Guru Nanak's times, were *Kashaf-ul-Mahjub* and *Tazkara-i-Auliya*. The writer of *Kashaf-ul-Mahjub* was Abu-ul-Hasan Hajwari (1009-1072 A.D.), also known as Data Ganj Baksh. He settled in Lahore and authored this book. It contains many miracles. At one place, he wrote that a saint named Abdullah was sleeping in the garden under a tree and a snake was fanning him by waiving a branch of a bush at him.⁴ Similarly, *Tazkara-i-Auliya* also contains innumerable miracles. The writer of the book is Farid-ud-Din Attar (1119-1230 A.D.) whose real name was Shaikh Ibrahim. This book has now been published in Lahore wherein we come across many miracles of different kinds. It contains a story of an old lady named Rabaya. She makes an earnest prayer that she being very weak and old could not walk to the holy Ka'ba. In response to her prayers, Ka'ba moved towards her in a far off forest. When prophet Ibrahim went to Ka'ba, he found that it was not there.⁵ There was a time when miracles were taken to be outward signs of prophethood or a spiritually elevated person. In the *Quran*, some miracles of Moses are inscribed that led the Muslims to believe that a miracle on physical plane is an essential part of an elevated soul. Therefore

4. *Mufrah-ul-Hiqiqat*, Urdu translation of *Kashaf-ul-Majub*, Lahore, 1945, p. 43.

5. *Tazkara-i-Auliya*, Urdu translation by Hakim Mohammad and Abdul Rashid, Lahore, p. 63.

the accounts of the supernatural or miracles have found their way into the *Janamsakhis* under the influence of Islamic religious literature. Besides, the miracles of the supernatural constituted the main features of medieval religious literature. Apart from the Islamic literature, we come across miracles in the Vaishnava literature as well. How Prahlad was saved from fire and miracles of the like can be cited as examples. Bhai Gurdas has significantly described the miracles of *Yogis* and *Sidhas* in his first *Var* :

The *Jogis* changed their bodies into those of lions, leopards, etc.
Someone wore wings and began to fly in the blue sky like a bird,
Someone became a cobra making hissing sounds,
While some other went mad and rained fire.
Bhangar Nath snatched stars from the heaven.
Some others flew and floated on water.⁶

Guru Arjan and Traditions of Guru Nanak

Various traditions about Guru Nanak continued in circulation up till the time of Guru Arjan (1581-1606 A.D.). When Guru Arjan met Mughal Emperor Akbar at Goindwal, he is said to have narrated the following popular story of Guru Nanak.⁷ It may be necessary to mention here that Abul Fazal has recorded the meeting of Guru Arjan with Emperor Akbar in the *Akbar-Nama*.⁸

When one day Guru Angad made a request to Guru Nanak to be pleased to visit a jungle, Guru Baba (Nanak) came to the jungle, nearby Kartarpur. Then Guru Baba, along with his Sikhs, walked through the jungle. Then his Sikhs said, "Gracious Babaji, we are thirsty." Babaji said, "Are you really thirsty?" They replied, "Yes our Lord, very thirsty." Then Guru Nanak said, "What should we do. There is no Ganges nearby." Soon there was heard a sound like storm and water came out gushing and bubbling. Then Guru Nanak asked the Sikhs, "If you are thirsty, drink water." The Sikhs drank water and took bath also. Other people who were also there, said, "There was earlier no water in this jungle, wherefrom this river has now emerged." Then those onlookers went forward to find out. Guru Nanak said, "They are sightseers, they would make noise." Then Guru Nanak lifted his hand, waved it backward. All those people went back. None could go forward.

6. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, I. 41.

7. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak Dev*, Vol. II, Amritsar, p. 137.

8. *Akbar Nama*, Lucknow, Vol. III, p. 514.

It is not our subject here to discuss or determine which Ganges it was and how it came forth gushing. From this account it can be transpired that tradition concerning Guru Nanak had not been put to pen by that time. It is probable that these *sakhis* were written after the compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib* by Guru Arjan in 1604 A.D. A large number of Guru Nanak's hymns found quoted in the *Janamsakhis* could not be available to any writer of the *Janamsakhis* before that. No doubt hymns of Guru Nanak were very much on the lips of the Sikh devotees and were recited in the congregations but still only a few of the hymns could be committed to memory by devotees. Before compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the hymns were not available in large numbers in written form. This can easily be verified from the fact that Guru Ram Das himself transcribed Guru Nanak's *Japu* which became the basic document for transcription of *Japu* in the Sikh scripture. That is why in some of the old manuscripts of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, a prominent insertion *Japu Nishan Guru Ram Das* is found written at the start of the *Japu*. The fact that *Janamsakhis* and other related works came into existence after the compilation of the scripture in 1604 is irrefutably established by the oldest available copy of *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala, dated 1658 A.D., which includes the hymns of Guru Arjan. There are many hymns of Guru Arjan in the *Puratan Janamsakhi* as well. If these *Janamsakhis* had been compiled/written earlier, these could not have contained the hymns of Guru Arjan.

Many a prevalent tradition of Guru Nanak found their way into the *Guru Granth Sahib* one way or the other. *Var Ramkali* by Satta and Balwand is included in the scripture. Satta and Balwand were contemporaries of Guru Angad and were famous *Gurbani* singers (*Kirtanias*) of the time. They were brothers. Satta lived up to the time of Guru Hargobind. He used to compose *pauris* or stanzas in praise of each Guru at the time of his succession. Internal evidence in the *Var* itself suggests that it was composed during the pontificate of Guru Angad. This *Var* contains some of the traditions of Guru Nanak Dev. For example it says :

The Master to the Disciple made obeisance.
With Nanak still alive :
While living himself, the Master drew on *Angad's forehead* the paste
mark. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 967

Guru Nanak taught his followers to lead a detached life even

while living in riches (*Anjun-mahen-Niranjan*). This was known in the Hindu terminology as *Rajyoga*. The mythological Raja Janak was accepted as the ideal *Rajyogi*. His *Bishan Padas* were commonly recited among the Hindus of Punjab. The influence of such Hindu literature made the tradition of Guru Nanak susceptible to mythological colouring and Guru Nanak began to be projected as the incarnation of Raja Janak. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* written in the 17th century states that Guru Nanak was accepted as the incarnation of Raja Janak. This statement is a mis-representation that seems to have been made by getting information from such quarters which ever remained anxious to place Guru Nanak and his faith within the orbit of Hinduism. The position is made clear in one of the *svaiyyas* sung in praise the Guru Nanak by Kalh one of the *Bhatts* (traditional bards or panegyrists who recited poetry in praise of warriors or rulers. In Sikh terminology, *Bhatts* are those spiritually exalted people who sang the praise of the Gurus), as enshrined in the *Guru Granth Sahib* :

Of the Supreme Preceptor, ocean of joy, eraser of sins,
 Pool of the holy Word I sing laudation.
 His laudation sing too in deep meditation men of profound poise,
 oceans of wisdom,
 Yogis and wandering hermits.
His laudation sing too Indra and gods, devotees like Prahlad
 Who of spiritual joy have tasted.
 Saith the bard Kala : Noble laudation sing I of Guru Nanak,
 Who Raja-Yoga practised.
 Janak and the *rishis*,
 Supreme Yogis united to God sing too laudation of the Guru,
 Perfectly endued with joy in God, master of all faculties—
 His laudation is sung by those who by guileful *maya* are not beguiled,
 By Brahma's sons, by the holy and accomplished Yogis too is sung.
 His laudation is sung too by Dhoma *rishi* and by Dhruva of
 immutable station,
 Who joy of devotion have tasted.
 Saith the bard Kala : Noble laudation sing I of Guru Nanak,
 Who Raja-Yoga practised.
 His laudation sing *rishis* like Kapila, Supreme Yogis
 And the endless line of divine incarnations.
 His laudation sing too Jamdagani's son Parshuram
 Whose *strength of* arm and axe *Rama*, glory of the Raghu clan
 snatched.

His laudation sing too Udhav, Akroor and Bidur
 Who the Lord, pervasive in all selves realized.
 Saith the bard Kala : Noble laudation sing I of Guru Nanak,
 Who Raja-Yoga practised.
 His laudation sing too the four castes, the six-hermit orders
 And deities like Brahma.
 His laudation sings in ecstasy Shesh-Naga with his thousand tongues,
 In unbroken absorption of meditation.
 His laudation sings too Mahadeva the ascetic
 Who endlessly has meditated.
 Saith the bard Kala : Noble laudation sing I of Guru Nanak,
 Who Raja-Yoga practised. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1389

For the sake of better understanding, it seems appropriate to give below the translation by Manmohan Singh as well :

Single-mindedly contemplate thou thy Lord, the Bestower of
 blessings. He is the Support of the saints and is ever manifest.
 Grasping His feet I enshrine them in my mind.
 Then sing I the praises of the most exalted Guru Nanak.
 I sing the praise of the most sublime Guru, the ocean of bliss, the
 destroyer of sin and the fountain of the Lord's Name.
 Yea, of Him, sing the profound, the sober and the supremely wise,
 The Yogis and the wandering saints also reflect upon him.
 Indra and the like and the saints like Prahlad, who realise the spiritual
 bliss, sing the praise of Guru Nanak.
 Kal, the poet, sings the sublime praise of Guru Nanak who enjoys
 both the temporal and spiritual kingdoms.
 King Janak and the great Yogis of the God's way, sing the praise of
 the Omnipotent Guru Nanak, who is brimful with the Lord's
 elixir.
 Janak and the like, saints, adepts etc. and the silent sages sing and
 chant the praises of Guru Nanak, whom mammon, the deceiver,
 can deceive not.
 Dhoma, the saint, immovable is whose realm, sings the praise of Guru
 Nanak, who realises the love and relish of the Lord's meditation.
 Kal, the poet, sings the sublime praise of Guru Nanak, who enjoys
 of the temporal and spiritual empires.
 —Guru Granth Sahib (Translation by Manmohan Singh, Vol. 8, pp. 4587-88)

Contribution of Guru Hargobind

After the compilation of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the tradition of Guru Nanak became available in written form. This was the time of Guru Hargobind (1606-1644 A.D.) who sought to locate and

identify the historical places connected with the life of Guru Nanak. He himself went to places such as Nankana Sahib, Sultanpur Lodhi, Nanakmatta and many other places which Guru Nanak had visited. It is due to this fact that at the places visited by Guru Nanak we find memorial shrines established in the honour of Guru Hargobind also. There is a *gurdwara* in the memory of Guru Hargobind at Nankana Sahib. Similar is the case with other towns such as Sultanpur Lodhi. The Sikh tradition has it that Maharaja Ranjit Singh got traced the site of Guru Nanak's visit to Srinagar (Kashmir) in the fort of Hari Parbat which exists till today. There is a *gurdwara* in the memory of Guru Hargobind outside the Hari Parbat fort. When Guru Hargobind came to know that the *peepal* tree at Nanakmatta (presently in district Nainital, Uttaranchal), under which Guru Nanak Dev sat, was set ablaze by the *yogis* of that place, he went there and put vermilion (*sindhoor*) mixed in water in the roots of the tree which helped it regeminate into full blossom.⁹ That *peepal* tree is full of green leaves even now and is also known as Panja Sahib by the followers of the Guru in that area as every leaf of the tree is marked with some dots. But for these timely measures taken by Guru Hargobind, these historical places might have gone into oblivion for all times to come.

Although the tradition of Guru Nanak was put to writing for the first time during Guru Hargobind's time, a more important step was taken by Bhai Gurdas. He composed the first *Var* giving biographical details of Guru Nanak. Internal evidence goes to prove beyond doubt that it was written in the thirties of 17th century. The reference to Guru Hargobind as 'army-defeating warrior' indicates that the *Var* was composed when the Guru's reputation as warrior had been well established.¹⁰

First *Var* of Bhai Gurdas

Bhai Gurdas hailed from Basarke in District Amritsar. His father, Datar Chand, was the real brother of Guru Amar Das. Therefore Bhai Gurdas was a close relation of the third and the fifth Gurus and was first cousin of Bibi Bhani as well. When Guru Amar Das established the town of Goindwal, the whole family left Basarke and

9. *History of Gurdwara Nanakmatta*, Nanakmatta, p. 12.

10. For more details, see the author's note in *Janamsakhi Miharban*, Introduction, p. 82.

came away to settle at Goindwal. It was at Goindwal that Bhai Gurdas was born in 1558. His mother was Bibi Jeewani.¹¹ As he grew up, he devoted himself to the propagation of the Sikh faith. He made significant contribution as a Sikh preacher during the time of Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind. He acted as scribe when Guru Arjan compiled the Sikh scripture. His demise took place at Goindwal in 1637.¹²

Being so close to the house of the Gurus, Bhai Gurdas was well aware of the tradition that had enveloped the personality of Guru Nanak. At the time of writing his first *Var*, many Sikhs were alive who had themselves witnessed and experienced the glory of Guru Nanak. One such person was Baba Buddha. Bhai Gurdas makes a mention of him among the Sikhs of Guru Nanak in his eleventh *Var* :

Jitta Randhawa is a good man and the old Baba Buddha is absorbed in meditation

Like Bhai Gurdas, Baba Buddha was also very closely associated with the house of the Gurus. He used to perform the succession ceremony of the Gurus. His death took place during the pontificate of Guru Hargobind in 1631 A.D.

As distinguished Sikhs, Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha were very close to each other. Baba Buddha was a contemporary of Guru Nanak and had been an eye-witness to the great impact of the first Guru. It can be easily accepted that whatever Bhai Gurdas recorded about the life of Guru Nanak was embedded in the information passed on to him by Baba Buddha. In this way, the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas, the first written account on the life of Guru Nanak, carries the authority of a contemporary source.

The objective of the composition of this *Var* is found in the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Mani Singh :

Once the Sikhs asked Bhai Mani Singh that since some people belonging to small sects have adulterated and assimilated many discordant elements in the biography of Guru Nanak, it is necessary to separate water (untruth) from the milk (truth). You being the Guru's gifted person, kindly differentiate between the genuine and the spurious material.

11. *Bhai Gurdas*, Patiala, p. 5.

12. Bhai Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, Patiala, 1970.

Bhai Mani Singh told the congregation that when the *Guru Granth Sahib* had been compiled, the Sikhs made a request to the Guru that since there was no recorded tradition it was apprehended that the Sikhs might be misled by some unbecoming narrative getting into the tradition of Guru Nanak. Then the Guru asked Bhai Gurdas to compose a *Var* delineating the Guru's life so that the Sikhs might be able to read or listen to the *sakhis* (reverential accounts) which remained in conformity with the teachings of the Guru. Thus this *Var* of Bhai Gurdas came into being.¹³ It contains an account of different events of the life of Guru Nanak. Although it is brief and cryptic in style, it contains mention of all the eastern and western itineraries of the Guru and confirms that the Guru visited all the places of pilgrimages. Mention has also been made of the Guru's visit to the hills in the 28th and 29th stanzas of the *Var*. The *Sumer Parbat* stands for *Mer* or *Meru* hill about which refernces are found in the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*. Since the ancient period, this had been a very popular resort for the Indian mendicants. *Meru* means Kailash mountain. The 32nd and 33rd stanzas contain the account of his visit to Mecca. The Baghdad visit is described in the 35th and 36th stanzas. The habitation of Kartarpur is mentioned in the 38th stanza: "The Guru came to Kartarpur and put on worldly dress. He established his seat to preach his gospel." One verse from this stanza surprisingly resembles with a verse of Satta and Balwand, as included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It reveals that the issue of succession had remained in focus in those days. The verse is: "The sons did not obey the father and showed signs of disobedience." The preceding verse is: "The Guru made Ganges flow backward by giving succession to Guru Angad."

The 39th and 43rd stanzas describe the Guru's visit to Achal near Batala and his discourse with the *Siddhas* of that place. The visit to Multan is narrated in 44th stanza. The final phase of life of the Guru, proclamation at Kartarpur, the succession of Bhai Lehna and breathing his last are the subject matter of 45th stanza.

This *Var* can be described as the basic document enshrining the tradition of Guru Nanak. It contains that version of tradition which had come to be accepted up to the time of Guru Hargobind.

13. Bhai Mani Singh, *Janamsakhi*, Bombay, 1892, p. 12.

Janamsakhi, Miharban

One prevalent belief is that Miharban's *Janamsakhi*, which is also termed as *gosht* of Miharban, preceded Bhai Gurdas' above-mentioned *Var*. The *Janamsakhi* by Bhai Mani Singh, also known as *Gian Ratnawali*, clearly mentions that *gosht* of Miharban was in existence before the compilation of the *Var* by Bhai Gurdas. We have already quoted the relevant reference of *Gian Ratnawali* in this connection.

Manohar Das Miharban (1581-1640 A.D.) was the son of Guru Arjan's elder brother, Prithi Chand, and the grandson of Guru Ram Das. He took his education under the tutelage of Guru Arjan. He was a great writer and musician of the Gurus' verses (*Kirtania*) in his own right. Perhaps he was the first to make an attempt at the exegesis of the hymns of Guru Nanak and explain their spiritual significance in a dialogue form. Being a direct descendant of the Guru's family, he was conversant with the traditions of Guru Nanak. This fact gives added significance to his *gosht* or his *Janamsakhi* from historical point of view.¹⁴ Very few manuscripts of this *Janamsakhi* are available. Only two manuscripts could be traced till 1962, when this writer edited this *Janamsakhi*. The original manuscript could not be traced. Like other *Janamsakhis*, it contains numerous interpolations. Therefore, it was thought proper to name it *Janamsakhi* by Miharban.

This is the first *Janamsakhi* which contains a realistic and detailed description of Guru Nanak's itineraries (*udasis*). Other *Janamsakhis* give account of the Guru's travels towards different directions, i.e. North, South, East and West. But *Janamsakhi* Miharban suggests that the Guru went towards the South on his way back from eastern tour; which appears to be a likely possibility because a person who had to go to the South should not have come back to Punjab from Jagannath Puri. Also, many direct routes connect the famous temples of the South with Jagannath Puri. Therefore, it appears more plausible that Guru Nanak went to the South from Jagannath Puri.

Miharban seems to have had some knowledge of geographical locations of places which makes his account of the Guru's travels

14. For more details, see the introduction of *Janamsakhi Miharban*, edited by the author and published by Khalsa College, Amritsar; and also authors *Miharban Jiwan te Rachnavan*, published by Punjabi University, Patiala.

appear more realistic. This *Janamsakhi* mentions that Bhai Jai Ram, husband of Bibi Nanaki, was Uppal Khatri whereas *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi* says that he was Palta Khatri. Even today, there are some Uppal families in Sultanpur but none from the Palta caste. It is possible that some Uppal families might have been there in the 16th and 17th centuries from which fact Miharban drew this conclusion. Similarly, the details about the Mathura town given in his *Janamsakhi* appear to be correct :

“Thereafter the Guru spent five years in the country of the South after which he came to the North and visited Mathura, on the bank of the Jamuna. He visited the temple of Keshav” (p. 360). Keshav’s temple is the most famous shrine at Mathura which goes to prove that the author was not only conversant with the geographical location of Mathura town but was also aware of the importance of Krishna shrine at Mathura. It was a small temple during Guru Nanak’s time and its building was reconstructed during Jahangir’s time. Similarly, the surroundings of the Bharthari cave in Ujjain given in this *Janamsakhi* appears to be correct as it was located on the banks of river Sapra. But no mosque is to be found there these days. It is stated that Guru Nanak held repeated discussions with the *thags* (cheats) in the South and thereafter visited the town of Ujjain. “There was located the cave of Gosain Gorakh Nath. Pilgrims took bath there. After this, the pilgrims went to Anantkapur and the cave of Bharthari Hari. Guru Nanak also reached there. There was a mosque near the cave as one enters it from the right side. Further ahead was a platform which had a tamarind tree and on the right side of the tree was the entry of the cave. Another tamarind tree was beyond the cave at the platform of the mosque. Guru Baba sat there (p.300).”

In part II of the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, references to Muslims appear to be correct. Guru Nanak had a discussion with Mian Daud, the Pir of Shergarh (*Janamsakhi*, Part II, p. 182). Miharban states (*Janamsakhi* Part I, p. 511) that Guru Nanak went ahead from Shergarh. As described in the *Janamsakhi* there was a celebrated Muslim faqir Daud Kirmani in Shergarh. According to *Tazkara-i-Sufia-i-Punjab*, his death took place in 1574 A.D. and till today a festival is held at his tomb.¹⁵ Similarly, Sayyad Abdul Qadir Gilani

15. Ahjaz-ul-Haq, *Tazkara-i-Sufia-i-Punjab*, Kadusi, Salman Academy, Karachi, 1962, p. 273.

was another well-known saint who lived in Lahore. He was the preceptor of the Pir of Shergarh. He was a householder and lived on the bank of the Ravi. His death took place around 1535-36 A.D. A detailed discourse between the Guru and this saint is also recorded in Part II of this *Janamsakhi* (pp. 179-182). Thus the *Miharban Janamsakhi* provides us with some vital historical facts/clues.

An anecdote, about the composition of the *Japu* is also found in this *Janamsakhi* (Part II). It relates how Bhai Lehna, who later on became Guru Angad, edited the *Japu* by selecting *pauris* or stanzas of Guru Nanak from his verses, gave them the present form and recited it to Guru Nanak. On assuming the pontifical office, he authenticated this composition by adding his own *sloka* at the end.

Miharban's *Janamsakhi* (Part II) is the only work which contains valuable details about the life of Guru Nanak during his stay at Kartarpur. It also states that Bhai Lehna (who became Guru Angad) remained with Guru Nanak for a long time and took part in Guru Nanak's discussion with the *Siddhas* of Achal near Batala. He also accompanied the Guru to other places. This *Janamsakhi* also gives detailed information regarding the verses composed at Kartarpur by Guru Nanak.¹⁶

The *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*, written in the first half of the 17th century, came to light when Bhai Vir Singh edited and published it under the name *Puratan Janamsakhi*. I prefer to call it *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* because a copy of it, written in 1815 A.D., was taken to England by Henry Thomas Colebrook. He was a Sanskrit scholar and also a member of the East India Council and Vice-President of Asiatic Society, Calcutta. He donated this manuscript to the East India Company Library in England and after the formation of India Office in 1857, it came into the India office Library where it is preserved till today. Presently, this library functions with a new name, Commonwealth Relations Library. Ernest Trump studied it in 1872 and drew the attention of other scholars towards it. The Lt.-Governor of Punjab, Charles Atchison, brought some copies of it to the Punjab and Bhai Vir Singh edited and published it for the benefit of the Sikh multitude. Thus it came to be known as *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*. Another manuscript of this work was acquired by Bhai (Prof.) Gurmukh Singh from Hafizabad (District Gujranwala,

16. For details, see *Janamsakhi Miharban*, Vol. II, Amritsar, p. 248.

Pakistan) which resembles the earlier copy to some extent. This was published by Macauliffe for which it began to be named as Macauliffe Wali or Hafizabadi *Janamsakhi*. The colophone of the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* mentions the year of its compilation as : *Kaljug Char Hazar Sat Sau Pant Barsbitya* viz the Kalyug has passed 4735 years. If we try to find out the corresponding year of the Christian era, according to the Indian Ephemeris of Kannu Pillay, it works out to be 1634 AD which suggests that this *Janamsakhi* was written at the time when Bhai Gurdas was alive. It is just possible that the author might have before him the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas, as its influence is evident on his work. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* had also been written by that time. These three writings resemble with one another very much. Many *sakhis* are quite similar in these two *Janamsakhis* and at places their language is also the same.¹⁷ From this, it can be safely surmised that all these writings are based on the early tradition of Guru Nanak.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the *Puratan Janamsakhi* was written by Bhai Sewa Das in 1588 A.D. and that it was the oldest *Janamsakhi* but the name of its author and the year of its writing is not corroborated by any reliable source. None of the available copies of this *Janamsakhi* suggest the name of the author or an earlier date of compilation. Its internal evidence suggests that it was compiled in 1634. Historically speaking, it is very useful for compiling the biography of Guru Nanak as it provides very reliable information. For example, wherever the *vanjaras* made their halts, the habitation known as Tanda was established. A town known as *Vanjarian da Tanda* is still in existence in the south of Nanakmatta in the Tarai area of Rudarpur District in the Uttaranchal state. According to this *Janamsakhi*, Guru Nanak visited this town.

Some inhabitants viz. Afghan Muslims of Village Kiri Afghana, in present day Gurdaspur district near Sri Hargobindpur, became disciples of Guru Nanak. This incident is found in the *Puratan Janamsakhi* only. Kirh Nagar or Kirhgram was the ancient name of Baijnath. Here, people of Kirh clan lived which is evident from an edict found in the temple of Baijnath. Guru Nanak's visit to Baijnath in Kangra district (HP) is described in *Puratan Janamsakhi*. The Guru's visit to another town Kotla Mian Mitha

17. *Miharban, Janamsakhi Guru Nanak Dev*, edited by Kirpal Singh, pp. 90-91 (Introduction).

Pasrur (District Sialkot, Pakistan) is also known from this source. This *Janamsakhi* describes Assam as *Assa Desh*. The Rajas of this region are mentioned as the descendants of Raja Samandar. The name of Raja Samandar suggests that the area under reference was Assam as Samandar was ancestor of Ahoms. Similarly, we find mention of *Dhanasri* which is the name of a valley of river Dhanasri towards the east of Assam.

'Makhdum Bahavdi' was the descendant of the Baha-ud-Din Zakaria of Multan and was the custodian of his tomb. He was a contemporary of Guru Nanak. He is named 'Makhdum Bahaudi' in the *Janamsakhi*. The details of his meeting with the Guru are also contained therein.

According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, Peshawar was founded with the name of Gorakh Hatri. Gorakh Hatri is an important tourist place in Peshawar even now. The Guru's visit to Gorakh Hatri is mentioned in this *Janamsakhi*. Another significant fact which is not given in any other text is that before Guru Nanak breathed his last, he himself handed over his *bani* to Guru Angad. "What was revealed to the Guru was recorded in the *Pothi* that was passed on to Guru Angad."

The *Bala Janamsakhi* mentions at the very outset that it was got written by Guru Angad. Bhai Bala who is mentioned as companion of the Guru during his travels went on relating these episodes to Paira Mokha of Sultanpur who recorded them. If we accept this version as correct, this *Janamsakhi* would have to be accepted as most authentic and the earliest of all the versions but from its study no such conclusion could be drawn. Compared to the *Vilayatwali* text, its language is of much later period. In the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* Bhai Lalo is named as *Badisut*, but the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala refers to him as *tarkhan* : *tarkhan* is a more modern word than *badisut*. According to the *Gujranwala Gazetteer*, the place Eminabad was named after Mohd. Amin Khan during Akbar's reign. The *Bala Janamsakhi* gives its name as Eminabad while it is called 'Saidpur' in the *Vilayatwali* version. The place was known as Sayyadpur during Guru Nanak's time. And Babur also mentions the name Sayyadpur in his *Memoirs*. Besides this, the language and word structure of the *Bala* text show that it is of later period than that of the *Vilayatwali* or *Miharban* versions. For details, a reference can be made to the book *Katik ke Visakh* by Karam Singh which contains a detailed discussion about this *Janamsakhi*.

It is written in the *Bala* text that Bhai Bala was a Sandhu Jat by caste and was the Guru's friend of childhood. But this is not supported by any other source. In the *Var* of Bhai Gurdas mention of Bhai Mardana is there but Bhai Bala does not figure anywhere. In the 11th *Var* of Bhai Gurdas names of prominent Sikhs up to the time of Guru Hargobind are given, but Bala's name is missing in this list also. Even the *Vilayatwali* and the *Miharban* texts are also silent about him. No other old source lends support to his existence. All agree that Lehna remained with Guru Nanak for a minimum period of 3 years and a maximum period of 7-8 years. Therefore, he knew all the disciples and companions of the Guru. It is surprising that neither Bhai Bala nor Guru Angad recognised each other. The opening account of the *Bala* text clearly mentions that they did not know each other :

Bhai Bala yearned to have a glimpse of the Guru when Guru Angad came to limelight. Bala Sandhu had heard that Guru Nanak had nominated a Khatri, Angad by name, as his successor. His caste was Trehan, but he had hid himself at some unknown place. He heard that he lived at Khadoor Khehras. Bala Sandhu set out for Guru Angad's *darshan*. He brought offerings whatever he could afford. He found him sitting and making grass strings (*munj*). Bala Sandhu made his obeisance and Guru Angad spoke : "Bhai Bala Sat Kartar. Be seated." Guru Angad stopped making grass strings. He enquired from Bala wherefrom he had come, what brought him there and who he was. Then Bala Sandhu folded his hands and told the Guru that he was named Bala, *got* Sandhu, resident of Talwandi Rai Bhoie.

When Ernest Trump made a comparison of Bhai Bala *Janamsakhi* with the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* in 1872, he made the following observations :

The later tradition which pretends to have knowledge of all the details of life of Nanak was therefore compelled to put forth as Voucher for its sundry tales and stories, Bhai Bala, who is said to have been the constant companion of Nanak, from his youth days up, whereas our old *Janamsakhi* does not even once name Bhai Bala. If Bhai Bala had been a constant companion of Nanak and a sort of mentor to him, as he appears now in the current *Janamsakhi*, it would be quite incomprehensible why never a single allusion should have been made of him in old tradition."¹⁸

18. Earnest Trump, *The Adi Granth*, London, 1877. Preface p.(v).

We are fortunate to have come across a copy of the manuscript of the *Bala Janamsakhi* written in the 17th century during the time of Guru Har Rai. This was written by one Gorakh Dass in 1658 A.D. This manuscript is lying with Piara Lal Kapur at Delhi and its copy is available in the Punjab Historical Studies Department of the Punjabi University, Patiala. The ancestors of Piara Lal Kapur were residents of Lahore who migrated to Delhi and settled there in 18th century.

Before the discovery of this manuscript scholars like Karam Singh, Bhai Vir Singh and others believed that the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala was written during the time of Guru Gobind Singh and not earlier. Karam Singh, (*Katak Ke Visakh*, p. 240), says that "Guru Gobind Singh had assumed *gurgadi* in 1732 Bikrami i.e. 1675 A.D. Therefore, it could be safely presumed that this *Janamsakhi* did not come into existence before that. It would have been written in the last years of the 10th Guru." This newly discovered manuscript has proved that Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* was in existence in 1658 A.D., but we have yet to ascertain as to how and when this *Janamsakhi* came into existence.

This is generally accepted that this *Janamsakhi* was written some time after the *Parchi* of Baba Hindal. According to the *Guru Hindal Parkash*, Baba Hindal was born in 1573 A.D. and he died in 1648 A.D.¹⁹ Bidhi Chand, the son of Baba Hindal, died in 1658 A.D. and in this very year the *Janamsakhi* manuscript was written. According to Karam Singh, the work which influenced this work was *Parchi* of Baba Hindal which contains the life of Baba Hindal. This *Parchi* was written in 1655 A.D.²⁰ In this way, the above referred to manuscript could be the first or second copy of *Bala Janamsakhi* which was written in 1658 A.D. A reference to *masands* therein had made many people believe that it was written in the time of Guru Gobind Singh but the said extract about the *masands* is also found in this recently found manuscript of 1658 A.D. Before the death of Bhai Bala, it is recorded at the end of the *Janamsakhi*, Guru Angad said, "God has made clear that such people came under strong temptation when they came to see the offerings of the Sikhs to the Guru. They cannot remain honest. Bhai Bala, you have the full grace

19. Masand Mai Das *Urf Sunder Singh*, *Guru Hindal Parkash*, Amritsar.

20. Karam Singh, *Katak Ke Visakh*, p. 240.

of Guru Nanak." This suggests that the *masands* had become corrupt during the time of Guru Har Rai. Guru Gobind Singh ultimately put an end to this institution. The contention that this *Janamsakhi* was got written by Hindalis is supported by the following five *sakhis* included therein :

1. *Sakhi* of Prehlad Bhagat
2. *Sakhi* of Dhru
3. *Sakhi* of Sidhas
4. *Sakhi* of Pt. Dinanath
5. *Sakhi* of Ghoi Jat

In all these *sakhis* it is stated that Baba Hindal would be born after Guru Nanak and he would be a more powerful and glorious person. This goes to prove that its author is a disciple of Baba Hindal who goes on repeating that Baba Hindal was greater than Guru Nanak. As given in *Hindal Parkash*, these five *sakhis* continued to be published till 1896 A.D. These five *sakhis* had been very popular and in wide circulation among the Hindalis.

The *Bala Janamsakhi* manuscripts of 1658 A.D. starts with Bhai Bala and ends with Bhai Bala as is evidenced by the following extract :

"Ek Onkar Satgur Parsad : *Janamsakhi* Sri Guru Baba Nanak. Pothi written by Paira Mokha Khatri of Sultanpur on *Vaisakh Sudi fifth* 1582 *Bikrami* at behest of Guru Angad. Paira Mokha along with Bala Sandhu *Jat* of Talwandi Rai Bhoe found out Guru Angad and they verily took two months and seventeen days. Whichever places the Guru visited was narrated by Bhai Bala in a simple and steady way. Bhai Bala and Mardana, the rebeck player kept company of the Guru. At the time of the Guru serving in the Sultanpur Modikhana; Bhai Bala was also with him."

This is the beginning of the *Bala Janamsakhi*. The next *sakhi* is the extension of this *sakhi*. *Samvat* 1582 is also wrong because Guru Nanak was at Kartarpur at that time. His demise took place in 1596 *Bikrami* (1539 A.D.). A critical study of this initial part of the *Janamsakhi* reveals that it is just an introduction of Bala who is projected as a companion of Bhai Mardana. Bala and Mardana are stated to have accompanied the Guru during his travels. As already stated, no other *Janamsakhi* or other sources mention the name of Bala whereas Mardana's name occurs in most of them. Bala's

name has been given prominence in this *Janamsakhi* only. The name of Bhai Bala has been mentioned four times in the last two sentences of the extract given above.

The epilogue of this *Janamsakhi* ends with the death of Bhai Bala. Then Bhai Bala said to Guru Angad : "Guruji, my body has grown old, it should depart from this world." At this; Guru Angad said, "there is still two month's time for your body to leave this world. These two months you should stay with us." Then Bala stayed with Guru Angad for two months. When two months elapsed, he died. Then Guru Angad lit his pyre with his own hands. Other Sikhs wanted to stop him, but Guru Angad said, "there was no difference between Guru Nanak and Bala. The difference was only of the master and the disciple. Speak *Sat Kartar*, Speak *Sat Kartar*."

There are two *sakhis* preceding this, a close study of which along with the aforesaid five brings out clearly the real motive of the author for writing this *Janamsakhi*. The motive evidently was to degrade Guru Nanak in comparison with Baba Hindal. Apparently, the author is a follower of Baba Hindal.

Besides the followers of Baba Hindal, a line of copyists of this *Janamsakhi* also came into existence who refused to believe that this had been the handi-work of a follower of Hindal with a motive to degrade the Guru. They believed that the original *Janamsakhi* had been tampered with and new material was interpolated by the followers of Hindal. Therefore, the copyists tried to 'improve' the text by eliminating objectionable *sakhis*. Bhai Santokh Singh, author of *Nanak Parkash*, was one of them. The 'improvement' had been made in this *Janamsakhi* by different writers at different times. If we compare these 'improved' versions with the original one, we find hardly any resemblance between them. The additions and deletions have been made in each copy. Some copies have recorded only once instead of repeating five times the prophecies about Baba Hindal. Some have excluded this portion presuming it to be interpolation by Hindalis. In fact most of them have deleted it altogether. Some have written the *sakhis* of Guru Nanak's demise before the death of Bala at the end. Some have given the dialogue of Guru Angad and Bala at the end along with the death of Bala. Yet some others have shown Bala reaching Talwandi at the end and have tried to explain the absence of the account of death of the Guru.

One manuscript of the *Bala Janamsakhi* available in the library

of Languages Department, Patiala (MS.420) is dated 1788 A.D. In the last *sakhi* of this manuscript Bala is shown as taking leave of Guru Angad and going back to Talwandi. If we accept this as true, we will have to believe that Bhai Lehna did not meet Guru Nanak long before his death which appears to be incorrect because Miharban says in his *Janamsakhi* that Bhai Lehna remained with Guru Nanak at Kartarpur for quite a long time which appears to be more probable.

The *Bala Janamsakhi* was first printed at Lahore in 1874 A.D. by Chiragh Din Book Sellers. Subsequently, it was published by Rai Sahib Munshi Gulab Singh. Both these publishers excluded the portions relating to the prophecies about Hindal and also omitted *sakhis* of *Majaut* and *Sehj Kusehj* in order to make this acceptable to the people. The *sakhi* of *Majaut* where Guru Nanak had been stated to have married a Muslim woman was included in the *Janamsakhi* to justify the marriage of Bidhi Chand, son and successor of Baba Hindal, with a Muslim woman. The descendants of Baba Hindal at Jandiala Guru (District Amritsar) accept that one of the successors of Baba Hindal married a Muslim woman whose tomb is still extant at Jandiala Guru (statement of Bishan Das of Jandiala Guru). Thus this *sakhi* is a clear case of interpolation by the Hindalis.

Bala may be a fictional character or a real life-long companion of Guru Nanak, his work does contain some earlier traditions of Guru Nanak's life. Guru Nanak's mother-in-law was greatly upset with Guru Nanak on account of his going on long tours. Only this version gives us the unique relationship of mutual love and affection between Nanak and his sister. The conversation of Bibi Nanaki with the mother-in-law of Guru Nanak is very natural and realistic and her complaint about Guru Nanak's indifference for homely affairs was understandable. Nanaki who was herself issueless had fondness for the issues of her brother, Nanak and that is also understandable.

The author of this *Janamsakhi* appears to be presenting psychological situations at places; while describing Guru Nanak's life. He has tried to highlight Guru Nanak's character and the atmosphere of his household. He has portrayed in a subtle way how groups of saints used to visit his house and how they were entertained. The Guru's charitable and merciful disposition and his mother-in-law's dislike for such things is also well brought out. The decision to entrust Sri Chand to the care of Nanaki and sending Lakhmi Chand to his grand-maternal parents, on the eve of the Guru's departure

from the house on the missionary tours (*Charya Sodan Dharat Lukai*) and his mother-in-law Chando Rani's outburst of anger are outcome of such situations. It has also dramatically represented the royal dishes of Malik Bhago as full of blood and the dry loaves of Bhai Lalo as full of milk. The presentation of such social and domestic/family situations in this work make it more acceptable.

Janamsakhi Bhai Mani Singh

What form the tradition of the Guru took after the creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh has been recorded in Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*. In the opening lines, it is stated "Once the Sikhs enquired from Bhai Mani Singh (the most prominent religious personage of the time) to present before them in detail the information about Guru Nanak contained in the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas." Bhai Mani Singh replied, "Just as an ant cannot lift an elephant and a crocodile of a small pond cannot cross the mountain, I am unable to give exposition of Guru Nanak's traditions. However, just as swimmer gives indication by fixing reeds in a stream to mark the safe way to cross the river, I keep in view the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas and other details of Guru Nanak gathered from the court of Guru Gobind Singh and shall try to explain them according to my limited capacity."

This *Janamsakhi* is based on the exegesis of the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas and the then prevalent traditions about Guru Nanak. The influence of the time on the form and content of tradition is quite evident. From his childhood, Guru Nanak's respect for the holy book is shown in this work. It is stated that he used to make *pothis* at home, then covered them with fine pieces of cloth. When other children called him to play, he would say 'I am reading the *pothi*.'

It appears that the *Bala* and *Vilayatwali* versions had a deep impact on the work of Bhai Mani Singh. Mani Singh gives Guru's birth in the month of Visakh, which shows that the author was fully conversant with these earlier works; besides this, there is no mention of Bala accompanying Guru Nanak in the first two itineraries towards East and the South. Bala is mentioned for the first time in the journey to the North. It is mentioned that Guru Nanak returned to Talwandi after his travels to the South. It is stated : When Kalu left that place, Bala and Mardana came to Baba Nanak. They made

obeisance to him. The Guru asked, "Will you, Bala, go with us or would you stay at home?" Then Bala replied, "I had already made a mistake by not accompanying you." "Let us go to north, Bala," said the Guru. Then Bala and Mardana set out with Guru Nanak. This goes to prove that Bala did not accompany the Guru in the first two travels. It also proves that this portion of the *Janamsakhi* is free from influence of the Bala version. So the claim that Bala always remained with Guru Nanak does not appear to be correct. In this *Janamsakhi* account of the visit to Mecca-Madina is taken from the *Macce di Gosht*, as has been indicated in the text itself. It is stated: "full one year passed in religious dialogue with Muslim saints and the detail of the interview with Rukn-ud-Din has been given in the *Gosht*. Any detailed mention of this account here, is uncalled for."

From this; it is evident that the traditions of Guru Nanak's visit to Mecca had already been written in the form of *Macce di Gosht* before the writing of *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Mani Singh. When this *Gosht* of Mecca was written is not known. But one thing is certain that it was written sometime after the *Vilayatwali*, *Miharban* and *Bala Janamsakhis* had been written. About the *Gosht* of Mecca and Madina, *Mahan Kosh* (Kahn Singh) has written as under: "This *Gosht* which is also named *Paknama*, was composed by some Sikhs after the composition of *Rag Mala* by Alam Poet, because it contains the additional names of six *ragas* and *raginis* apart from those of other *ragas*." Bhai Mani Singh's text also contains many imaginary and baseless stories as it says that Mohammedans do not eat pigs because God was incarnation in the form of *Varah* and Mecca had a Shivling, etc. etc.

There is a lot of disagreement whether Bhai Mani Singh himself was the author of this work or not. As revealed by a close study of this text, it appears to be the work of someone from among the audience of Bhai Mani Singh, who came under his influence to undertake this task. Under the inspiration of Bhai Mani Singh's interpretation many works have been written as the author of *Guru Bilas Patshahi Chhevin* writes: "Bhai Mani Singh related this *katha* to Bhai Bhagar Singh and preceptor of my poet—Dharam Singh—also heard it. He related it to me and I gave it this poetic form." Thus it appears that Bhai Mani Singh related this *katha* of the first *Var* to the *sangat* and someone gave it the form of a *Janamsakhi* by including some other *sakhis* current among the people at that time.

Because the authorship of the *Janamsakhi* is attributed to Bhai Mani Singh, it became popular as Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* irrespective of the fact whether it was written by him or not. Notwithstanding this, it is important from historical point of view for the following reasons :

- a) This is the only *Janamsakhi* which states that Guru Nanak visited Pakpattan twice. Maybe he might have visited many other places in Punjab also twice, but visiting Pakpattan twice is mentioned in this *Janamsakhi* only.
- b) Giving financial assistance to Mardana for the marriage of his daughter and preparing other articles for her is recorded in this *Janamsakhi* only.
- c) The idea of visiting places of pilgrimages came to Guru Nanak when he was at Talwandi because it says that Guru went on pilgrimage at the age of twenty.
- d) Visiting Jwala Ji by the Guru is recorded in this *Janamsakhi* only.
- e) Guru's visit to areas of West specially to Baghdad etc. is described in greater detail. No other *Janamsakhi* describes this part of Guru travels.
- f) Details based on the *var* of Bhai Gurdas are of great historical significance because that *var* remains the only primary source for writing any credible account on the life of Guru Nanak.

Conclusion

While analysing the *Janamsakhi* tradition in the following pages I have kept the following important points before me to measure upto the modern historical methodology :

- (i) Critical examination of the extant *Janamsakhi* traditions in order to decipher earliest traditions and their affinity with historical events.
- (ii) The shrines dedicated to the memory of Guru Nanak vis-a-vis their connection with *Janamsakhi* tradition.
- (iii) Land and sea routes of the 16th century.

It has to be noted that all the *Janamsakhis* coming down to us viz. *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban*, *Bala* and *Mani Singh* versions were written during different periods of history and from different

perspectives. The *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* written in a terse style during the period of Muslim domination.²¹ Miharban's *Janamsakhi* follows the style of *goshtis* (exegesis) before the congregations, wherein background is provided for explaining the hymns. The *Bala Janamsakhi* follows a typical Socio-Psychological approach which kept it popular with average devotees for a long time. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* is based on classical *Vendantic* pattern and with a view put forth the objective (*Parmarath*) of each anecdote. That is why, it was not received well.²² The perspectives of each of these *Janamsakhis* being different, there is marked variance in details as well. This makes the task of constructing the life story of Guru Nanak difficult. I have scanned all the *Janamsakhi* texts to find out events and areas of tradition closer to reality and truth with detailed end-notes with regard to rationale of the conclusions.

The situations as they existed in the sixteenth century India and the west were quite different as they obtain today. Khurasan, which Guru Nanak has referred to in his *Bani* "encompassed a vast territory including what is now called southern Turkmanistan and northern Afghanistan"²³ but now "it is a province of north-eastern Iran with its capital at Mashhad." Likewise many towns and cities have since perished due to vagaries of time and new towns have come up in their place. In India Hajipur was a flourishing town on the northern bank of the Ganges (in the present state of Bihar). But now we find the capital town of Patna opposite to the site of Hajipur on the southern bank of the Ganges. Similarly Nizamabad on the bank of Tansi river was once an important town of Jaunpur kingdom. In this way an attempt has been made to trace the names of places as they existed five hundred years ago so as to identify the names of various towns, villages and cities mentioned in the *Janamsakhis*. Saidpur is mentioned, as the place where Lalo a devotee of Guru Nanak lived; in the *Vilayatwali* and *Miharban Janamsakhis*. Babur in his *Tuzak* calls it Sayyadpur. After its devastation by Babur, it got the name Shergarh

21. Influence of Muslim domination is indicated from an episode wherein Guru Nanak is carried before God and is made to drink a cup of *amrita* or asking Raja Shiv Nabh to sacrifice his son just as in Muslim tradition, Hazrat Ibrahim is asked by God to sacrifice his son.

22. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* was published only once in 1892 A.D. Thereafter it was published in 1993 by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar as *Gian Ratnavali*, edited with critical analysis by Jasbir Singh Sabar. (Ed.)

23. *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*, pp. 1008, 2002.

during the short lived Suri hegemony. During the reign of Akbar, Mohd. Amin Khan revived it with a new name Eminabad (modern Gujranwala district of Pakistan). Prayag was renamed as Allabad under Akbar. Baijnath was Kirgram or Kir Nagar, Peshawar was Gorakh Hatri and Assam was Asa Desh. We find the mention of these very names in *Janamsakhis*. The names of Sufis and others holy men like Makhdum Baha-ud-din, Abdul Qadir Gilani, Mian Daud Shergarh etc. etc. which appear in the *Janamsakhis* have been closely scrutinized to ascertain whether they were contemporaries of Guru Nanak. Thereafter, the details of the discourses given in the *Janamsakhis* have been analysed. The authenticity of hymns recorded in the *Janamsakhis* as central points of the majority of the episodes has also been duly verified. In this process my anxiety has been to clear the historical facts of the mist that had shrouded them with exegesis of hymns or hearsay accounts.

The historical shrines commemorating Guru Nanak's visit to various places have a special significance vis-a-vis the *Janamsakhi* tradition. It is significant that Guru Hargobind initiated the steps to establish and preserve these shrines. He paid a visit to Talwandi Rai Bhoi (modern Nankana Sahib) to identify a few places connected with the early life of Guru Nanak. The process was continued by the Sikh Sardars and Maharaja Ranjit Singh when they came to power. The Maharaja visited Gurudwara Babe-di-Ber at Sialkot (Pakistan) as also Rori Sahib at Eminabad (Gujranwala, Pakistan) to pay obeisance and make offerings.²⁴ Raja Udai Singh of Kaithal also took steps to locate historical places connected with Guru Nanak's tradition and got many shrines constructed at Pehowa and Kara (modern Haryana). These shrines enable us to know about the route taken by Guru Nanak while travelling up to Kurukshetra. Similarly, there is an old gurdwara at Sirsa, which has been referred to by Tara Singh Narotam. The Sikh chiefs of Patiala, Nabha and Jind States also got identified and erected several such holy places in the Guru's memory.

In the first half of the 19th century, there happened to be a minister named Chandu Lal Bedi in Hyderabad (Deccan) who belonged to Dera Baba Nanak. He also got located some places which had been visited by Guru Nanak in the south and got shrines

24. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, translated by V.S. Suri, pp. 311-313, Delhi 1961.

built there. He got gurdwaras built at the following five places :

1. Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu)
2. Sri Rangam-Trichunapalli (Tamil Nadu)
3. Trinamallai (Tamil Nadu)
4. Kanchipuram (Chennai)
5. Guntur (Andhra Pradesh)

However, the gurdwara at Trichunapalli which happened to be by the side of Sri Rangam temple has since fallen down. All others are managed by the Udasi saints and are not in a good state of maintenance. Tilganji Sahib Gurdwara, also known by the name of Kundikutlam, is said to be near Palamkota, Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala). But whether it still survives could not be ascertained. The shrines in Baroch (Gujrat) and Nanakmatta (Uttaranchal Pradesh) are of special historical significance.

An apocryphal work entitled *Haqiqat Rah Muqam Raje Shivanabh Ki* mentions a tradition of Guru Nanak's visit to Sri Lanka. This has been confirmed by an epigraph found around the mid-20th century. In this epigraph a reference is found about Guru Nanak meeting the king of Koti, Dharmaprakarma Bahu IX. His grandson was King Mayaduni who had Sitavaka as his capital. The fact that the *Haqiqat Rah Muqam*...text mentions King Mayaduni of Sitavaka is of special significance. Close to Matiakalam (Batticola) is a village called Kurukalmandap which it seems, was founded in the memory of the Guru. Just like an epigraph, in Turkish language, found towards the west of Baghdad authenticates the tradition of Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad, similarly, the epigraph of Sri Lanka and the village founded in the Guru's memory helps us to approach the truth about Guru Nanak's visit to Sri Lanka.

Statues of Guru Nanak are often found installed in the temples of Ladakh and Tibet, especially in the Tibetan temples of the Mansarovar Lake, Chamoli valley, etc. Of course, the Tibetans revere and worship Guru Nanak taking him to be an incarnation of Padamsambhava. But this simple fact is an indication enough to conclude that the Guru had journeyed through this region. It will be appropriate to explain here that wherever Guru Nanak went the natives of that area accepted him as a religious divine in their own way. The original Dharu population of the Terai and Nanakmatta area give importance to the *dhooni* of Guru Nanak like that of

Gorakh Nath. They take the ashes of the *dhooni* to their respective homes at night. The Subis of Iraq who keep flowing hair and hang around their necks the portrait of Guru Nanak call themselves the followers of the Guru. In Sri Lanka, Guru Nanak is remembered as *Sidh Nath* and *Ulag* Guru. Decidedly the shrines and tradition have a close link and they are of great importance in helping us to outline the historical events of the life of Guru Nanak.

The trade and travel routes of the times of Guru Nanak remain the only corroboratory evidence with us to verify the travels of Guru Nanak. While travelling through Punjab especially travelling from Talwandi to Sultanpur or from Sultanpur to Batala, Guru Nanak might have taken local routes connecting one village with another but outside the Punjab he could travel only on the popular routes and through prevalent means. If the travellers took boats in the river Ghaggar while going to Ayodhya, Guru Nanak also could have travelled by boat. Some rivers in India have ever remained an important means of travel and the same was the case in sixteenth century. That is why the gurdwaras commemorating his memory are on the banks of the prominent navigable rivers. For example, Nizamabad (District Azamgarh, in UP) is on the bank of the river Tansi. Baroch (Gujrat) is on the bank of river Narbada and Benaras (Varanasi) is on the bank of the Ganges. Lakhpat, a port in the Katchh area is on the bank of river Kori, a tributary of the Indus. The tradition of Guru Nanak travelling by boat is still related to a small boat preserved in the *khanqah* of Uch Sharif (Bahawalpur, Pakistan).

The popular routes of travel during the 16th century help to determine the routes of the odysseys of Guru Nanak. A study of the old mountainous routes reveals that during the summer days many people travelled from Haridwar to the Terai region passing through Kedarnath and Badrinath, and through the Antdhara and Lopu Lekh Passes. This was a centuries-old route taken by the Indian mendicants. If we study the places connected with Guru Nanak on this route, we find that he had also taken this route to reach Nanakmatta. Haridwar at the one end and Nanakmatta at the other, have shrines dedicated to the memory of the Guru. Besides, Srinagar, Tihri Garhwal, Kot Duar also fall on this route and at these places we also find shrines commemorating the Guru's visit. The route of travel from Kamrup to Dhaka was via the Brahmaputra river. This

was the popular route for going to Kamrup. That is why all the shrines commemorating the Guru's memory that are situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra, such as Dhubri, Gauwahati (Kamrup), etc. A reference to the route taken by Guru Nanak on his way to Mecca and Medina is made by Bhai Gurdas in his *Var I*. In that route Mecca comes prior to Baghdad. This shows that Guru Nanak reached Mecca by the sea route. No sea route has ever been considered appropriate for going to Puri as there was ever a danger of cyclones and travel by ship in the Bay of Bengal was considered dangerous. Therefore, a land route was most frequented for going to Puri from the Bengal side. It was a popular route for travellers from Puri to travel southwards and all the important religious places of the south such as Kanchipuram, Trivanmalai and Trichnapalli, etc. fall on this route. The route from south to the north touches Bidar (Karnataka State), Nanded (Maharashtra State) and Baroch (Gujrat). If we analyse the route taken by the Hajis from Mecca to Baghdad, we learn that Caliph Harun Rashid's wife Begum Zubaida had got a direct route especially built from Medina to Baghdad. This route has been in use from the tenth century onwards. The possibility of Guru Nanak having taken this very route cannot be ruled out.

The route from Baghdad to Kabul was via northern Iran and northern Afghanistan. The caravans often travelled on these routes. During the Lodhi regime, the trade between India and Kabul had declined due to frequent Mughal incursions. There was no direct route from Kabul to Peshawar then. Abul Fazal says in his *Ain-i-Akbari*, that a direct route from Kabul to Peshawar came into being during the regime of Akbar. Prior to this, if one wanted to reach Peshawar from Kabul, one had to travel through Parachinar region and via the Bannu and Kohat. That is why the gurdwaras commemorating Guru Nanak's visit are found in Peshawar from Kabul and Parachinar region.

It is in this context that an analysis of the routes current during the times of Guru Nanak is very important for the study of the *Janamsakhis*.

The *Janamsakhi* tradition does not help much in deciding about the dates connected with Guru Nanak's life. The *Vilayatwali* and the *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhis* mention only two dates : the dates of birth and demise. Both the texts give Vaisakh Sudi 3 Samvat 1526 as the date of birth. The *Miharban* text also gives the same date. In fact,

all the *Janamsakhis* except that of Bala accept Vaisakh to be the month of Guru's birth; therefore, we have taken this date to be the correct one. For more details, see Karam Singh, *Kattak Ke Visakh*. The *Miharban* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* do not give any date of the Guru's demise. The *Vilayatwali* and the *Mani Singh* versions mention as follows :

Vilayatwali Janamsakhi - Samvat 1595 Assu sudi 10

Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi - Samvat 1596 Assu sudi 10

The latter date, i.e. Samvat 1596 Assu Sudi 10, is the correct one. In the *Vilayatwali* text 1595 Samvat is mentioned which is *Gat* (previous) Samvat. Since Karam Singh has proved that the Bikrami Samvat was written in this way. Therefore, Samvat 1595 is previous (*Gat*) year whereas the real Samvat is 1596. It appears the author of the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* gives the actual Samvat while referring to the Guru's birth, but gave the *Gat* (previous) one while referring to the year of demise.

The dates mentioned in the oldest extant manuscript of the *Bala Janamsakhi* create a lot of confusion. To say that this *Janamsakhi* was written in 1582 Bikrami is not correct because in 1582 Bikrami A.D. 1525 Guru Nanak still lived at Kartarpur. As compared to this, the chronology followed by *Miharban Janamsakhi* is nowhere self-contradictory. That is why some scholars take these dates to be more trustworthy.

These dates are noted here :

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Birth of Guru Nanak 1526 Bk | = 1469 A.D. |
| 2. Going to Pandit for learning 1533 Bk | = 1476 A.D. |
| 3. Going to Mulan for learning 1534 Bk | = 1477 A.D. |
| 4. Sacred Thread Ceremony 1535 Bk | = 1478 A.D. |
| 5. Marriage 1541-42 Bk | = 1484 A.D. |
| 6. Birth of Sri Chand 1553-54 Bk | = 1496-07 A.D. |
| 7. Going to Sultanpur 1561 Bk | = 1504 A.D. |

But it is not known what is the basis of ascertaining these dates.

Still, some references and allusions in the *Janamsakhis* can help determine some dates. All the *Janamsakhi* texts agree that Guru Nanak took up a job in the *Modikhana* at Sultanpur when Daulat Khan Lodhi lived at Sultanpur. Daulat Khan was appointed governor of Punjab by Sikandar Lodhi and he shifted his residence from Sultanpur to Lahore which was then the capital of Punjab province. But before Guru Nanak went on preaching odysseys and at the time

of the *Bein* episode and a discourse with the Qazi; Daulat Khan was still at Sultanpur. Ahmad Yadgar, author of *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, states that when Babur conquered Punjab in 1524 AD, Ibrahim Lodhi wrote a letter to Daulat Khan Lodhi saying that his father had appointed the latter as governor of the Punjab twenty years back and that he had treacherously gifted away the Punjab to the Mughals. This shows that Daulat Khan Lodhi became governor of Punjab in 1504 A.D. Therefore, the *Bein* incident and the discourse with the Qazi took place either in 1504 or before that. In the light of this, it can be presumed that Guru Nanak's preaching odysseys started in 1504. This gets confirmed in another way also. Both the *Miharban* and *Bhai Mani Singh* texts mention that the Guru Nanak was at Kurukshetra on the day of the solar eclipse and that he was at Haridwar on the following Baisakhi day. In those days the route from Punjab to Haridwar was via Kurukshetra. This is the same route which Guru Amar Das took for going to the Ganges and which finds mention in a hymn of Guru Ram Das in the Tukhari *raga*. Therefore Guru Nanak left Kurukshetra after the solar eclipse and reached Haridwar by the Baisakhi day. For journey through the mountains beyond Haridwar, one could go only during the summer. Therefore, Guru Nanak's reaching Haridwar on Baisakhi seems significant. If we try to ascertain the dates of Baisakhi and the solar eclipse in the first decade of the 16th century, we can work out at least the year (1504 A.D.) when Guru Nanak started for his odysseys from Sultanpur.²⁵

The above discussion should make it clear that the basic objective of this treatise on the *Janamsakhi* tradition has been to identify the historical elements that lay deep beneath Sikh tradition which developed round the personality, teachings and preachings of Guru Nanak. The modern methodology being applied to dig out the historical truth has been kept in view but it has not been applied with a bias to reject such happenings embedded in tradition that could stand the test which is applied keeping in view the contemporary situations.

25. For details see, Swami Kannupillay, *Indian Ephemeris*. See also *Jantri 500 Years*, Pal Singh Purewal (Published by Punjab School Education Board, Chandigarh), 1994. Solar eclipse was on 24th January, 1506 A.D. and the following Baisakhi was on 29th March, 1506. Therefore it is likely that Guru Nanak would have started from Sultanpur in 1504 and reached Kurukshetra in early 1506 A.D. as he halted on the way at Eminabad, Makhdumpur, Pakpatan etc. etc.

CHAPTER 2

Analytical Study of the *Janamsakhi* Tradition - I

Birth

There was a village called Talwandi Rai Bhoe¹ situated in the *tapa* of the Bhattis, thirty-four miles south-west of Lahore, the capital of ancient Punjab : this village is these days known as Nankana Sahib. Here was born Guru Nanak in the house of Mahita Kalu (father) and Tripta (mother)² on Vaisakh Sudi 3, 1526 Bikrami³ (15 April, 1469) at 1 o'clock at night. Mahita Kalu was Bedi Khatri by caste and was posted as Patwari⁴ (a revenue official) in the village. At the

1. The accounts in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* and those of Bhai Bala and Bhai Mani Singh say that Guru Nanak was born at Talwandi Rai Bhoe. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records the village Chahlanvala, Police Station Barki (District Lahore) as Guru Nanak's birth-place. Chahlanvala was the place where lived the maternal grandparents of Guru Nanak. However, this fact is not corroborated by any other source. The second manuscript of the *Miharban Janamsakhi* now preserved in the Khalsa College Library, Amritsar, gives Talwandi Rai Bhoe as Guru Nanak's birth-place. Besides, page 52 of the *Janamsakhi* by Miharban records : "Then Guru Baba Nanak Ji [was born on] the land of Punjab, village Talwandi Rai Bhoe place of birth of Guru Baba Nanak." This implies that Talwandi Rai Bhoe has to be accepted as the actual place of birth of Guru Nanak.
2. The name of Guru Nanak's father is found mentioned in all the *Janamsakhis*. The name of his mother is not given in the *Puratan Janamsakhi*. The *Janamsakhis* of Bhai Bala and Bhai Mani Singh mention Tripta as mother's name. *Miharban Janamsakhi* gives the name as Tripro. The word '*tripta*' is found in the ancient Puranas as well and is thus quite old. The word '*tripro*' seems to be a derivative.
3. *Puratan Janamsakhi* and *Miharban Janamsakhi* mention Vaisakh Sudi 3 as the day of Guru Nanak's birth, but *Bala Janamsakhi* gives it as the full moon day of Kartik. The old manuscript copies of Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* also give Vaisakh. The *Guru Nanak Bans Prakash* of Sukhbasi Rai, a direct descendant of Guru Nanak, also gives Vaisakh as the date of birth. *Mahima Prakash* (prose) and or *Mahima Prakash* by Sarup Dass Bhalla also support Vaisakh. Thus, Vaisakh seems to be the correct month of the Guru's birth.
4. In the *Bala Janamsakhi*, Mahita Kalu is mentioned as *patwari*. *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* mentions him as 'Kalu Khatri Bedi by caste.' In the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Mahita Kalu addresses his son thus : 'Child Nanak, we are peasants (*Miharban Janamsakhi*, 67, Appendix 77). All this proves that he was both a *patwari* and a peasant.

time of his birth Guru Nanak did not weep like any other ordinary child, rather he uttered "Thy Name, Thy Name."⁵ Guru Nanak possessed an equipoised and peaceful temper by birth.⁶ He was not inclined to weeping like other infants. When he was 13 days old, he was named Nanak after the name of his elder sister Nanaki.⁷ He learnt to hold his neck straight when he was of three months and learnt how to sit when 7 months old. He learnt how to crawl as he was of 9-10 months of age and as he grew to be of one-and-a-half years he began to speak in a lisping manner. He started playing with other children as he was of 3-4 years.⁸ He would sometimes get aloof of other children and become absorbed in God.⁹ As he was of five years, he made an impact on the people of his village. He would discourse with both the Hindus and the Muslims about the Creator and His creation which assured the people of the child's divine inspiration.¹⁰ The chief of the village and the chief of

5. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p. 9 (Appendix 58). Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* states that Guru Nanak uttered 'Vahiguru' at the time of his birth which does not seem to be correct because the significance of the word 'Vahiguru' became current only after Guru Arjan had compiled the Sikh Scripture as the Bhattas recited 'Vahiguru'. The utterance "Thy Name, Thy Name" seems more akin to the temper and ideal of Guru Nanak's life.
6. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p.10 (Appendix 58), *Janamsakhi Bhai Mani Singh*, p. 42 (Appendix 331). In both of these works it has been explicitly stated that child Nanak had a very peaceful and equipoised disposition, and this also seems true of the Guru's life.
7. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p.10 (Appendix 58). When he was of nine days, the naming ceremony was performed. The *Bala Janamsakhi* says that this ceremony took place and he was named Nanak when he was of 13 days. The practice of performing naming ceremony after 13 days of birth is still prevalent among the Khatri. Thus, the latter view can be accepted as correct.
8. The details of the physical growth of child Nanak are given in both *Miharban* and *Mani Singh's Janamsakhis*, but no such details are given in the *Puratan* and *Bala Janamsakhis*. However, these details are of general nature, and are usually taken as correct.
9. In the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* it is said—'contemplated on God,' Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* also states : 'sat in a posture of the *siddhas* and recited 'Vahiguru' with each breath. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records : 'other children had different desires, Guru Baba Nanak had different aspirations. The *Bala Janamsakhi* has nothing to say on this point.
10. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* says : 'he began talking of higher spiritual things. The *Bala Janamsakhi* repeats the same sentence. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* also testifies it. But *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* refers to the recitation of *Gita*—a contention which is hard to accept.

Bhattis Rai Bhoë, and his son, Rai Bular, also learnt of this child's prodigy.¹¹

Schooling

When Guru Nanak was of 7 years,¹² his father chose an auspicious day¹³ to send him to a *pandha* (teacher) to learn.¹⁴ The *pandha* wrote¹⁵ for him *landa* alphabets¹⁶ which were then called *sidhojnaia*.¹⁷ A few years were thus spent in learning, and during this period child Nanak created a deep impress on his teacher.¹⁸ He completed his

11. *Miharban Janamsakhi* states in an explicit manner that Rai Bular was Rai Bhoë's son. The tomb of Rai Bular is also extant nearby Nankana Sahib. It seems both the father and son would have been at Talwandi during Guru Nanak's childhood. Rai Bular could have been more fond of Guru Nanak than his father because the *Janamsakhis* refer to him quite often.
12. The *Vilayatvali*, the *Miharban* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* say that Nanak was sent for schooling at the age of 7. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* refers to child Nanak being of 5 years then. The age of seven years to begin schooling seems more correct.
13. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban Janamsakhis* refer to no choice of an auspicious day, but the texts of *Mani Singh* and *Bala Janamsakhis* state that an auspicious day was chosen to send him to school. In olden times, it was a practice to choose an auspicious day for every important occasion. Thus, Guru Nanak's father could have chosen an auspicious day to start the schooling of his only son.
14. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* gives the *pandha's* name as Brij Nath Pandit, but this is not corroborated by any other source.
15. The *Vilayatvali* and *Bala Janamsakhis* do not specify as to what was written on the wooden slate (*patti*). The *Miharban* text says it was *sidhojania* but *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* says it was *bairakhari* (a *muharani* of 12 consonants and vowels). Since the *landa* script has no vowel sounds, *Miharban* text seems to be correct.
16. It was the general practice to learn *Sharda* in the hilly region of Punjab and *landa* script in the plains of Punjab. Some traders make use of this script even in modern times. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* says that the *padha* taught the Guru.
17. The term belongs to the *muharani* of the *landa* script. Beginning with the invocation to God (*om sidhai*), these words went on consecutively to say that "the entire world was manifested (by Him) and *Kal* or death stood ahead of it," "Creatures do different sinful deeds and they imbibe evil and give up virtue," "they remember not Him, nor recite His Name," etc. In this context there is a hymn in the *Guru Granth Sahib* under title "*Patti*" in *Ramkali* measure (*raga*) wherefrom these lines have been taken.
18. All the *Janamsakhis* record that Nanak left a deep impress of his ability on the *padha*. All these works say that at this time Guru Nanak composed a hymn: "Burn worldly love and pound it into ink and turn thy intelligence into superior paper..." (Sri Rag I, *Adi-Granth*, 16. The *Vilayatvali* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* say that Guru Nanak then uttered the hymn now titled "*Patti*" included in the Sikh scripture under *Asa* measure (*raga*) but the latter source also says that prior to this the Guru recited seven *slokas* of *Gita* for the benefit of his parents. In Guru Nanak's "*Patti*" and

studies before long and acquired considerable knowledge of Hindu religion about which we learn from various allusions made in his hymns. Thereafter, Mahita Kalu thought of sending his son to learn Persian.¹⁹ One day he took him to a *maulvi*. The first day the *maulvi* wrote alphabets on the wooden slate and taught him the initial alphabets of Persian script. Guru Nanak learnt all this quite soon and acquired proficiency in Persian.²⁰ He also learnt arithmetics and how to add and subtract. Thus, he was far ahead of his companions in a few days. The *maulvi* was quite surprised at the intellectual genius of this child.

Religious Ceremony : *Yajnopavit*²¹

When Guru Nanak grew up to be of nine years, his parents thought of performing the ceremony of *Yajnopavit* i.e. investing the child with the sacred thread called *janeu*.²¹ The *pandit* brought along a *janeu*

the hymn quoted above; is summed up the vast experience of life, viz., 'They who go by the names of kings and lords are beheld being reduced to dust, says Nanak when mortal departs, all false affections and ties crumble down' (Sri Rag I, G.G.; 16). All these compositions do not seem to have been possibly composed by a seven or eight year old lad.

19. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* says Turkish whereas the *Miharban* version calls it Muslim (*Musalmani*) and Turkish. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* refers visit to the *maulvi* whose name Qutab-ud-Din is also mentioned. Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla, in his *Mahima Prakash*, says :

Kaluji took along [Nanak] to Mullah's (*Maulvis*) house for study;
The Lord sat in the school—great was his splendour there.

Words of Persian are found in the hymns of Guru Nanak which shows that the Guru had learnt the Persian language.

20. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* says that Guru Nanak asked the *maulvi* the meaning of the alphabets which the latter had written on his wooden slate. As the *maulvi* could not explain, the Guru uttered *Siharfi*.

Alif [the first alphabet of Persian script] expects of us to remember God,
And discard all ego from mind.

This *Siharfi* attributed to the Guru is not included in the Sikh scripture. The *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* and *Bala* texts make no such mention of it. According to the *Miharban* version, the Guru recited to *maulvi* a hymn; which is also not correct because there is nothing in it to suggest its composition in childhood.

21. The *Miharban* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* say the ceremony of putting *janeu* took place at the age of nine. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala* versions give no such detail. The Guru has condemned *janeu* in quite a harsh tone in his hymns, and has rather said :

The thread is spun of cotton, and Brahmin twists it;
They kill a goat to eat and then ask one to wear [this thread];

made of cotton. As per the practice, then prevalent, a special area was earmarked for the ceremony. The ground was sanctified by smearing it with a paste of cow-dung mixed with mud. Nanak was made to sit there, and it was whispered in his ear that it was the religion of Brahmins and Khatri to wear *janeu*.²² The ceremony was complete and all the relations who had come to see it went back. However, all this did not leave any special impact on Guru Nanak's mind. The Guru has explained thus the real *janeu* in one of his hymns :

Make compassion the cotton, contentment the yarn;
 Contenance the knot and purity the twist;
 Such is the true sacred thread of the self.
 Thou Brahmin-priest ! put this on me shouldst thou have it.
 This thread neither snaps nor is soiled;
 Neither burnt nor lost.
 Saith Nanak : Blessed are the beings that around their neck put this.
 For four cowries is the thread bought, and inside the cooking-space
 put on.
 With it some reaching into the wearer's ear is whispered,
 By the Brahmin turned preceptor.
 When the wearer dies, the thread falls off—
 To the next world without the thread he departs.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 471

The Guru says that the *pandits* who perform the ceremonies of

► This proves that the ceremony was current in Guru Nanak's time and his parents might have also performed it and he seems to be writing everything from personal experience.

22. There is considerable difference of detail as regards the observance of his ceremony in the *Janamsakhis* of Miharban and Mani Singh. The latter refers to the performance by Kalu of a huge *yajna* for which Rai Bular hunted a deer, distribution of the meat of ten he-goats, and distribution of pancake (*luchis*) and *karah-prasad* (sweet pudding) among the holy men. There are many details of *janeu*-ceremony, Gayatri *mantras* recited by Pandit Brij Nath. Contrary to it, the former which is of much earlier date than the latter; mentions none of these details. The former version has been taken as correct. Mani Singh says that at the time of wearing *janeu* Guru Nanak recited to the Pandit the hymn—'O Nanak ! my body is a chariot and it has one charioteer' whereas the Miharban version says that he recited the hymn—'Make compassion the cotton, and contentment the thread, continence the knot and truth the twist.'

However, both these hymns reflect wide experience and deep thought. Therefore these hymns might have been composed at a mature age. Another such example is found in a hymn.

"The thread is not for organ, nor for woman (*Var Asa*)."²³ These hymns do not seem to have been composed by the nine year old Nanak.

wearing *janeu* are themselves engrossed in passions. They cannot put on a *janeu* which helps increase contentment in man that can save him from evil propensities :

The Brahmin throws not the sacred thread over his passions and lust
for woman.

Each morning is his face covered with shame.

His feet and hands by the thread are not restrained;

Nor his tongue and eyes.

Unrestrained by the thread he moves along.

Through twisting yarn, others with the thread he invests.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 472

Grazing the Cattle

Guru Nanak kept the company of the holy men during his childhood. Many such saints used to come to Talwandi and Guru Nanak would engage in dialogue with each one of them. He would listen to them attentively.²³ As he grew up in years, Mahita Kalu felt concerned to put him in some useful vocation. One day he asked Nanak to take the cattle to the fields to graze them. Nanak agreed, and next day he took the buffaloes and cows along and left for the pastures.²⁴ This became his daily routine. One day Nanak sat, as was his wont, wrapt in thoughts. His cattle strayed into the field of a Bhatti who in turn complained to the chief of the village, Rai Bular.²⁵ He sent for Mahita Kalu and enquired from him about Bhatti's complaint. Nanak replied that they should go and see the crop

23. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* says—"he held discourses with the faqirs." The *Puratan* (p. 8, App. 4) and the *Mani Singh* (p. 47, App. 331) versions say—"as a saint came, he would bring him home and warmly serve him."

24. All the *Janamsakhi* accounts agree that Guru Nanak went out grazing the cattle. The *Bala* account goes further and adds the story of snake providing shadow and the shade of a tree remaining fixed. It says that those were the days of the month of Vaisakh. The Guru was overtaken by sleep. A snake provided shadow with its hood to the divinely radiant face. Even the shadow of the tree under which child Nanak slept on another day did not move with the moving of the sun. Rai Bular saw this miracle. The *Vilayatvali*, the *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* texts do not mention the story of snake, but they do tell of the crop being intact even after the cattle had trampled over it. Both *Mani Singh* and *Miharban* versions also give the story of tree keeping its shadow fixed.

25. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* gives the name Rai Bhoe. The *Vilayatvali* and *Mani Singh* versions mention it as Rai Bular. Perhaps each peasant did not have access to Rai Bhoe, and Rai Bular used to resolve minor issues.

themselves. When they reached there, they found no harm done to the crops. Bhatti felt slighted.²⁶

Betrothal and Marriage

When Guru Nanak came of 16 years²⁷, his parents thought of his marriage.²⁸ They saw that he was not interested in any worldly vocation. They called in the family priest and asked him to find out a suitable match for Nanak. In search of such a match, he reached Pakhoke Randhawe (in modern-day Gurdaspur district), a village situated on the eastern bank of the Ravi. There lived a person named Moola, a *patwari* by profession and Chona Khatri by caste. He offered to marry his daughter, Ghummi,²⁹ to Nanak.³⁰ As per a local tradition, Ghummi was the only child of her parents. According to prevalent practice, Moola's brother and the family priest went to Talwandi Rai Bhoie, performed the betrothal ceremony of (Guru) Nanak and came back after fixing a date for

26. This episode is given in this way in the *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*, and it seems correct. When Bhatti saw from a distance that the herdsman is absorbed in himself and his cattle were grazing in his fields, he felt rather enraged and made the complaint immediately. When the field was inspected, there was no visible loss to the crop.

27. Nanak's age at the time of his marriage is given differently in different *Janamsakhis*. The *Vilayatvali* text gives it 12 years, Mani Singh makes it 14 years, *Miharban* 16 years while the *Bala* text gives 18 years. Since age in all the accounts is said to be adolescent, it will be proper to accept age of 15-16 years as correct.

28. Except the *Bala Janamsakhi*, all other accounts agree that Nanak's marriage took place at Talwandi which seems correct. The *Bala* account says it took place at Sultanpur. Among the Hindu Khatri, it is not considered proper for parents to go to the daughter's house for the son's marriage. It can be safely presumed that Mahita Kalu performed marriage ceremony of his son at Talwandi. Sukhbasi Rai Bedi, a direct descendant of Guru Nanak, also says in his *Guru Nanak Bans Prakash* that the nuptial ceremonies took place at Talwandi.

29. *Miharban Janamsakhi* (Kirpal Singh, *Janamsakhi Prampara*, App. 338, Punjabi University Patiala, 1969 hereafter cited as J.S.P.) but the *Bala Janamsakhi* gives it Sulakhani (App. p. 338). Maybe, her maiden name was Ghummi which was changed to Sulakhani after her marriage as per the practice.

30. The fact of the visit of the family priest of Bedis to Pakhoke Randhawe is given in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla says :

Then Kalu said to priest :
You go where lives the maiden's family.
Then Nanak's betrothal be done :
Thereafter his marriage be fixed—so say all.

marriage.³¹ It was also decided that the marriage party should reach Batala (Gurdaspur district) which was twenty miles (32 kms.) off Pakhoke Randhawe; the native village of Moola.³² A gurdwara, Dera Sahib, exists now on the site of Moola's house. Mahita Kalu went to Batala with the marriage party of his son. Marriage ceremonies of Nanak were performed there. The place where the marriage party halted is still marked by an old wall preserved since then : this gurdwara is named *Kandh Sahib*.

Saccha Sauda

Guru Nanak did not show much interest in business or worldly affairs even after his marriage. He remained restless, as ever before. He would meet saints and faqirs visiting Talwandi and had dialogue with them. On return home, he simply kept quiet and would lie down.³³ It was a matter of deep anguish for the parents that Nanak who was now a married person did nothing to earn livelihood but instead went about with saints and faqirs. They apprehended that he might not turn to the life of an ascetic. They also felt scared of the taunts of the people : who say that Kalu's son was good for nothing.³⁴ Thus, the parents always impressed upon him the need to take up some useful vocation.

One day Mahita Kalu advised his son to do some work. He gave him twenty rupees, saying that he could make a good deal with the money.³⁵ With his father's permission, Nanak left

31. All these details are mentioned in the *Miharban Janamsakhi* (p. 68 of App.) which can be accepted as correct.

32. All the *Janamsakhis* agree that the marriage took place at Batala (District Gurdaspur).

33. *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records : "he felt interested in nothing, cared not for home." "Members of the family said that he goes about with the faqirs" (*Puratan Janamsakhi*, p. 8 of App., J.S.P.). The *Miharban* account (p. 70 of App.) says : "as he got married, he maintained silence, spoke nothing." "Then he stopped talking and developed indifference towards household life. The mind of Guru Nanak did not show concern for worldly matters."

34. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* (p. 12 of App., J.S.P.) says : "Then the entire family felt sad and said that 'he had gone crazy.' Then Guru Nanak's mother came. She said, 'Leave these foolish things, People laugh at us saying that Kalu's son is good for nothing.'"

35. This episode of '*Saccha Sauda*' is available only in the *Bala Janamsakhi*. The *Vilayatvali* version (p. 13, App. 4, J.S.P.) says : "The sons of Khatri do business even if they have a fiver." Twenty rupees was then considered a huge amount. A single rupee amounted to forty *dams* and twenty rupees meant 800 *dams*. Hence, the need for an escort.

home along with another person who was asked to accompany him.³⁶

When Guru Nanak reached near Chuharkana, a village 15 miles (24 kms.) away from Talwandi, he met a group of mendicants (*sadhus*) who were hungry.³⁷ He thought what else could be a better deal than providing food to the hungry holy men. Thus spending the entire amount on feeding the hungry mendicants, he returned home.³⁸ When Mahita Kalu learnt this, he was much annoyed because he had given him money to do some good business transaction and not to feed the ascetics. Nanak was also well aware of his father's temper and instead of going straight to home, he hid himself under a huge tree in a dry pond beyond the woods a little away from the village. From there Mahita Kalu and sister Nanaki brought him home. The site where stood the bushes then is now marked by a gurdwara named Tamboo Sahib.³⁹ The place where he fed the hungry ascetics is now called Saccha Sauda (the true bargain).⁴⁰

Thought for Sojourn

When Guru Nanak was 20 years of age, he asked Mardana to accompany him on a pilgrimage.⁴¹ Mardana was also a native of Talwandi. He was a *Mirasi* by caste and used to play rebeck and sing

36. *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi* says that the person who accompanied Nanak was Bala, but this is not confirmed by any other source. *Mahima Prakash* also says that he was an 'attendant' and not Bala :

The advice of father Nanak abided.

Taking attendant along, he left.

37. According to the *Bala Janamsakhi* (p.12, App. J.S.P., 226) the saint whose name is written as Sant Ren, said : "[We] eat whatever God sends. That is why we live detached in seclusion."

38. The *Bala Janamsakhi* says that Nanak went to a nearby village. He bought various things from there, prepared the food, offered the cooked food to them and then returned home.

39. The Gurdwara Tamboo Sahib is one of the important shrines at Nankana Sahib (District Shaikhupura, Pakistan).

40. The town is also named Saccha Sauda and it also has a railway station of the same name.

41. The *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* (App. J.S.P., 338) records : "When Baba became 20 years of age, one day he told Mardana that he would go on a pilgrimage and further asked him if he would accompany him. "This fact is not corroborated by any of the *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* or *Bala* versions. But one thing comes out clear that the idea of going on a travels across the sub-continent was the result of his past reflection and that he used to share such thoughts with Mardana.

verses of saints like Kabir, Trilochan, Ravidas and others. Nanak would listen to the recitation of such hymns from him.⁴² When Mardana heard this proposal, he responded by expressing his inability to go on pilgrimage because he was to marry off his young daughter.⁴³ Yet Nanak one day asked his father's permission to go on a pilgrimage. Mahita Kalu did not accede to this request. Instead he said : "We have just performed your marriage. There is lot of time to do pilgrimages."⁴⁴ Hearing this, the Guru kept quiet.

Calling in the Physician

Guru Nanak was now past 20, but he was still indifferent to any worldly vocation. Once Guru Nanak did not eat anything for a few months and remained absorbed in meditation.⁴⁵ His mother and other relatives got worried and thought that Nanak has fallen prey to some ailment. Father Kalu sent for a physician. The physician came and felt Nanak's pulse and asked him as to what ailed him. Nanak in response laughed and said that he suffered from no illness. Only he pines for union with the Lord. The physician was surprised at this and left without prescribing any medicine. On Mahita Kalu's enquiry about diagnosis, he replied that he had no prescription for such a malady.

After some time⁴⁶ the Guru delineated this incident as follows :

42. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* (p.73, 78-79 of App., J.S.P.) says : "He used to play with Nanak during their childhood days. Mardana of Talwandi was of the Dum Kalal family. He played on rebeck and sang verses of Namdev, Kabir, Trilochan, Ravidas, Dhanna and Beni. He recited these verses to Guru Nanak."

43. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* (App. J.S.P., 338) records : "My daughter is of marriageable age. First I will marry her off. Only after that I could go."

44. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* (p.110, App. J.S.P., 337) says : "Baba one day asked Kalu that his mind is on going for a pilgrimage. Kalu replied : "Son, you have just got married." This shows that the idea to travel through the country had come to Nanak during his stay at Talwandi, but it could be translated into reality only after the *Bein* episode at Sultanpur.

45. The *Vilayatvali* text (p.17, App. J.S.P., 7) says : "Then for three months Baba Nanak did not eat or drink anything." *Miharban* records : "Then four or five months passed and Baba Nanak neither ate anything nor conversed nor quarreled (p. 45, App. J.S.P., 72). This episode is narrated in the Mani Singh version also (p. 109, App. J.S.P., 337). The *Bala Janamsakhi* makes no mention of it. However, sensing Nanak's general temper, this episode can be accepted.

46. The *Vilayatvali*, the *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh Janamsakhi*s record that Guru Nanak recited this hymn to the physician.

Some brand me as a ghost, some goblin;
 Some call me man : Nanak is a simple, humble man.
 Nanak is mad after the Divine King, after Him crazy.
 Other than the Lord recognize I none. (I-Pause)
 To be really crazy is to be fear-crazed of God.
 And other than the Lord, none other to recognize.
 A man would be mad *after God*, if in this one sole task he were to
 engage :
 He should realize the Lord's command and other kind of understanding
 discard.
 Truly mad *after God* would he be, should he love the Lord,
 Should look upon himself as foul,
 And the rest of the world as good. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 991

Sultanpur

The elder sister of Guru Nanak was married to Jai Ram.⁴⁷ Jai Ram lived at Sultanpur, a town situated on the eastern bank of rivulet Bein a tributary of river Beas. The town is 45 kms. (28 miles) south-west of Jalandhar, a famous city of the Doaba region. The earlier name of Sultanpur was Tamasvan.⁴⁸ Sultan Khan,⁴⁹ an officer of Mahmood Ghazanavi's army, named it after his own name. He also tried to make it prosperous. However, Sultanpur of Guru Nanak's time acquired more of its splendour from Daulat Khan Lodhi,⁵⁰ a relative of Bahlol Khan Lodhi who was the founder of the Lodhi dynasty. In fact, it was the major town of Daulat Khan's *jagir*. Guru Nanak's brother-in-law, Jai Ram, was an employee of Daulat Khan.⁵¹

47. As per the *Bala Janamsakhi*, Jai Ram a Palta Khatri by caste; once visited Talwandi and saw Nanaki drawing water from the well. He sent a request to Mahita Kalu, through chief of the village, Rai Bular, for marriage with Nanaki. Kalu agreed, and thus Nanaki was married to Jai Ram. These details do not find mention in any other source, though all the *Janamsakhis* record Nanaki's marriage with Jai Ram. According to Miharban, Jai Ram was a Uppal Khatri.

48. Heun Tsang says that here was once a Buddhist shrine which was razed to make way for a royal inn. Since the water of this rivulet as well as the earth here is black, the place was called Tamasvan (tamas=black; van=jungle). Daulat Khan Lodhi built a fort here which finds mention in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. For more details, see *Report of the Tour in Punjab 1878-89* by Alexander Cunningham, Superintendent, Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1882, p. 55.

49. See *Report of the Tour in Punjab*, pp. 55-58.

50. Daulat Khan Lodhi was the son of Tatar Khan. Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, says he became governor of Punjab in A.D. 1504. According to *Tuzk-i-Babari*, he died in 1526.

51. The *Bala Janamsakhi* says that Jai Ram had gone to Talwandi to measure lands; ☛

When Jai Ram learnt that Nanak did not feel interested in any worldly vocation, he wrote a letter⁵² to Mahita Kalu suggesting that Nanak be sent to Sultanpur. Maybe, he felt at home there. He even hinted at trying for a job for him. Before the receipt of this letter Mahita Kalu had already tried to put him in varied vocations but had failed. Therefore, the family agreed to send him to Sultanpur. Hearing of this letter,⁵³ Nanak also agreed to go to Sultanpur to visit his sister there.

When Guru Nanak was about to leave Talwandi, his wife was sad and began weeping. She said, "What will become of me ? Though you were despondent in Talwandi but I had the satisfaction that you were at home. Now you set out for a far off place. God knows when you would return home or may not return at all." Hearing such words, Nanak gave her solace and said, "When I get some job, I shall send for you to Sultanpur."⁵⁴ Saying this Guru Nanak set out for Sultanpur.

Modikhana

When Guru Nanak reached Sultanpur, he was affectionately received by Nanaki and Jai Ram. Next day Jai Ram took him to Daulat Khan and recommended his name for a job. Daulat Khan gave Nanak a searching look and was impressed by his personality. He appointed Nanak to work in his *Modikhana* (the stores) along with Jai Ram.⁵⁵

➤ it means that Jai Ram was a revenue official. But this fact is not corroborated by any other source. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban Janamsakhi* refer to him as *modi* or keeper of stores of Daulat Khan.

52. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* accounts say that Jai Ram wrote a letter. The *Bala* text is also one with it. Nanak's despondency was as worrisome for Nanaki as for any other member of the family. Such a letter from Jai Ram was only natural. *Bala Janamsakhi* says that Rai Bular wrote a letter to Jai Ram suggesting that Nanak be invited to Sultanpur but no other source corroborates this fact.

53. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* (p. 73, 79 App. J.S.P.) says that Jai Ram sent two letters, one to Mahita Kalu and another to Nanak.

54. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban Janamsakhis* refer to the solace given to Sulakhani. The *Bala* and *Mani Singh* versions make no such mention.

55. *Bhai Mani Singh* and *Bala* accounts say that Jai Ram requested Nanak to take up a job. At first he did not agree but after a lot of persuasion he consented. This statement is not in conformity with the prevailing circumstances. It is clear from the *Vilayatvali* and *Miharban Janamsakhis* that Jai Ram met Daulat Khan along with Nanak. Looking at Nanak, Daulat Khan remarked that he looks honest. Thereafter, he appointed him.

Jai Ram was the chief executive of the *Modikhana*. *Modikhana*⁵⁶ was considered a very important institution of a *faujdar* since those days (the time of Sikandar Lodhi, 1488-1517) revenue was collected in the form of grains. Although there was no ban on paying revenue in cash (which Ibrahim Lodhi put after 1517)⁵⁷ yet the problem of safe custody of currency made the land tenants pay revenue in kind. The revenue was a fixed part of the total produce.⁵⁸

During the last decade of the 15th century Daulat Khan became Governor of Punjab after the death of his father, Tatar Khan, in 1504.⁵⁹ When Nanak was appointed in the *Modikhana*, Daulat Khan was only the *jagirdar* (or *faujdar*) of Sultanpur.⁶⁰

The Lodhi Kings conferred *jagirs* on their select officers and these *jagirdars* in turn used to give lands to some of those who worked for them. All military positions were based on land grants. The employees in the *Modikhana* (where Nanak was employed) received paltry amount as salary and their main source of livelihood was *alufa*⁶¹ which meant they were also given fixed quantity of grains on daily basis.

In the *Modikhana*, Nanak was entrusted with the job of weighing grains⁶² and keeping records of it. He would daily write

56. *Modikhana* is a Persian word which implies a place where grains are stored and then distributed as per requirement. Implicitly, *Modi* is the person who is in charge of the grain stores.

57. All the *Janamsakhi* accounts agree that Guru Nanak came to Sultanpur after he was 20 years of age. Sikandar Lodhi ascended the throne in 1488. As such, Guru Nanak's stay at Sultanpur coincides with Sikandar Lodhi's time.

58. In the Lodhi Kingdom, there was no port as a result of which trade with foreign countries was minimal. Thus free flow of currency was not possible. Therefore, grains were rather cheap and currency was rare. For details see, Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Allahabad, 1929, p. 68.

59. According to *Tuzk-i-Babari*, Daulat Khan died in A.D. 1526. He became Governor of Punjab in 1504. See *Tarikh-i-Shahi* by Ahmad Yadgar, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1939, p. 22. It is written therein that when Babur conquered Punjab in 1524, Ibrahim Lodhi wrote a letter to Daulat Khan Lodhi that my father had made you the Governor of Punjab and that you have been in this position for the last 20 years, how come you have now called in the Mughals. This proves that Daulat Khan Lodhi became the Governor of Punjab in 1504.

60. According to *Tuzk-i-Babari*, Daulat Khan had first of all the *jagir* of Sultanpur. See Lucas King, *Memoirs of Babar*, Vol. II, p. 170.

61. The *Puratan Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak got *alufa* which implies that Guru Nanak received grains daily as stipend or livelihood.

62. All the *Janamsakhi* versions are unanimous that Guru Nanak's job in the *Modikhana* was to distribute grains.

the details on the account-book. He used to complete this work by each evening even if he had to sit late hours. He would not rest until all accounts were resolved. On the site of the *Modikhana* now exists Gurdwara Hatt Sahib. Some of the weight measures said to be of Guru Nanak's time are preserved there.

Nanak has two sons : Sri Chand, Lakhmi Chand

A few years went by after Nanak's marriage. He remained despondent as ever. Both mother Tripta and wife Sulakhani felt rather sad at this.⁶³ Nanak's elder sister, Nanaki, was also issueless although quite some years had passed since her marriage.⁶⁴ Because of this reason also, Nanak's parents wished him to sire a child soon. Nanak's mother-in-law, Chando Rani, was also worried. One day she talked to Nanaki suggesting that she advised her brother.⁶⁵ Nanaki also shared her desire with him when she and her husband visited Talwandi.⁶⁶ After some time a son was born to Nanak who was named Sri Chand. Thereafter Nanak was blessed with another son, Lakhmi Chand.⁶⁷

63. The *Vilayatvali* text (p.12 of App. J.S.P.) says, "Then Baba Nanak's wife came to her mother-in-law. She said, 'O mother ! How do you relax while your son is on bed for the past four days without taking any food or drink.'" The *Miharban* version (App. p. 70) also says that the mother felt concerned at the silence of her son. However, the *Bala* version makes no such reference. Maintaining long silences seemed to be a habit with Nanak.
64. It is generally accepted that Nanaki had no issue. She was born in A.D. 1464 and was thus five years older than Nanak. No *Janamsakhi* account makes any reference to her issues. Only *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* mentions that Guru Nanak gave Nanaki a clove and a cardamom and said that a son and a daughter will be born to her.
65. In the *Bala* account we come across a detailed description of Nanak's mother-in-law going to Sultanpur and complaining to Nanaki. She lamented that Nanak did not pay any attention to his wife. The account of the Guru not talking to his wife is also found in the *Vilayatvali* and *Miharban Janamsakhi*. Then Nanaki advises Nanak. The episode regarding complaint of Nanak's mother-in-law to Nanaki is not available in the *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* and *Mani Singh* versions. But as were the then prevalent family traditions, this seems probable.
66. The *Bala Janamsakhi* says Sri Chand was born at Sultanpur. The *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* place the birth of both Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das at Talwandi.
67. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* (p.11, App. J.S.P., 4) says : "Then the Lord willed and two sons were born to Guru Nanak—Lakhmi Dass and Sri Chand." This will lead us to construe that Lakhmi Das was the elder and Sri Chand the younger of the two. However, the *Miharban* and the *Bala* texts state that Sri Chand was the elder.

Audit of Accounts

Many categories of people such as landlords, overlords, chiefs, etc. came to the *Modikhana* to deposit grains, jaggery, etc. as land revenue. Daulat Khan's officials, soldiers, accountants and others received grains in the required quantity in lieu of salaries.⁶⁸ Guru Nanak behaved honestly with each one of them. All the *Modis* who worked there before him used to keep unto themselves one-tenth of the required quantity : it was called *dahinimi*.⁶⁹ It was a corrupt practice in vogue, Guru Nanak put an end to the this practice and weighed as much as was sought by anybody. In this manner, those who received grains were favourably affected. They began singing eulogies of the new *Modi*. The reputation of Nanak as honest *Modi* spread all around.

Many mendicants, monks, ascetics, faqirs and other poor people of different groups began to flock to *Modikhana* to get grains. Nanak had a special love for such people. Sometimes Nanak would take a faqir along and got a daily livelihood quota fixed for him.⁷⁰ Thus, all these holy men were much pleased at this newly-appointed *Modi*, and they had special words of appreciation for him. In this way, fame and glory of Nanak spread far and wide.

There was a village called Malsihan, 13 kms. (8 miles) off Sultanpur. The chief of this village was Bhagirath.⁷¹ He was a God-fearing man, and was a devotee of the goddess Kali.⁷² One day as he went to Sultanpur to deposit grains (as land revenue) in the

son. *Guru Nanak Bans Prakash* also mentions that Sri Chand was elder. Therefore Sri Chand is mostly accepted as first of the two.

68. The *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p. 76, App. J.S.P., 81-82. These details are not available in any other source.

69. The reference to '*dahinimi*' is found only in the *Miharban* version (p. 76, App.J.S.P.). Such practices were rampant during the times of the Lodhis.

70. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* calls it *alufa* : "Took them to (Daulat) Khan and got *alufa* fixed. Thus they filled their bellies." - Sakhi No.9, App. J.S.P., 8.

71. It is apparent that Malsihan is near Sultanpur. According to the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, the chiefs of the region had to go to *Modikhana* to deposit grains etc. there. The details of Nanak sending Bhagirath to Lahore and the story of Bhai Mansukh are found only in the *Vilayatvali*, *Bala* and *Mani Singh* versions. *Miharban's* account makes no mention of Bhagirath. However, the fact of Bhagirath becoming a Sikh of Guru Nanak at Sultanpur seems correct as Bhai Gurdas records : "Bhagirath is said to sing eulogies of (goddess) Kali in Malsiha."

72. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, XI, 15. This story is recorded in the *Nanak Prakash* (Ch.27) also.

Modikhana, he was highly impressed by the new *Modi*. He recognized the great spirit within Nanak which nourished the poor. Besides, Nanak was fully proficient in the job assigned and was ever absorbed in God. He felt as if the goddess whom he worshipped also served this great soul. All the doubts in his mind were cleared and he became a disciple (Sikh) of (Guru) Nanak. Now whenever he visited Sultanpur, he experienced peace and poise after meeting Nanak.

As Nanak's glory spread with each passing day, someone jealous of him made a complaint to Daulat Khan saying that Nanak squandered the *Modikhana* grain among the ascetics and faqirs. The job of the *Modi* was of great responsibility. So Daulat Khan called for Jai Ram and asked him to check the accounts of the *Modikhana*. Jai Ram told Nanak and the officers so appointed by Daulat Khan checked the accounts. Everything was found in order. The complaint made by the jealous proved to be false.⁷³

Marriage of Mardana's Daughter

The news of Nanak's appointment as *Modi* had reached Talwandi. The fame of his alms-giving and liberality had also accompanied. Whosoever from Talwandi on a visit to Sultanpur met Nanak, he would get his *alufa* fixed⁷⁴ and the fellow returned to Talwandi in a very happy frame of mind and sang praises of Nanak.

The stories of Guru Nanak's liberality touched Mardana deeply, and he felt a keen desire to meet Nanak. As chance would have it, Mahita Kalu one day asked Mardana to go to Sultanpur and bring some news of his son. On getting this message, Mardana went over

73. The reference to the checking of *Modikhana* accounts is not found in the *Vilayatvali* and *Miharban Janamsakhis*, but is available in *Bala* and *Mani Singh* versions. In the *Bala Janamsakhi*, the narrative of the checking of Guru Nanak's accounts is given in full detail. It also records the name of the complainant and details of the alleged dues. Looking at the liberality of Guru Nanak, making of a complaint and checking of the accounts remained a possibility. Since Guru Nanak maintained proper accounts, no discrepancy could be detected.

74. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* (p. 22, App. J.S.P., 8) records : "And he who came from his native place, he (Nanak) would get him to meet (Daulat) Khan and fix *alufa* for him. Thereafter he (the visitor from Talwandi) had enough to survive. All were pleased with Guru Nanak's grace." *Miharban* version also gives a likewise account (p. 70, App. J.S.P., 81). The *Bala* and *Mani Singh* traditions make no mention of it.

to Sultanpur.⁷⁵ Guru Nanak made him stay with him for some time. Baba Nanak would get up early every morning and go to Bein rivulet for a bath. Thereafter, he remained absorbed in meditation for a while. Then Mardana would sing verses of saints and similarly *kirtan* used to take place every evening.⁷⁶ Some time went by this way. Sensing the liberal nature of Nanak, one day Mardana placed his problem before him. He sought some help for the marriage of his daughter.⁷⁷ On hearing this, Nanak replied that he should think of the articles required for the purpose and then make a list of them so that these could be arranged.⁷⁸ Mardana brought such a list and gave it over to Baba Nanak.

After some days Bhagirath came to offer his respects to Nanak. At that time Nanak put before him the paper; Mardana had given him. Bhagirath attentively listened to everything and said that he would go to Lahore and fetch all these articles. Keeping in mind

75. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban Janamsakhis* (p. 8 & 22, App. J.S.P.) tell us of Mardana's visit to Sultanpur. The *Vilayatvali* text says: "Mardana, the *dum* by caste, came from his place. He came from Talwandi and stayed with Baba Nanak. The *Janamsakhis* of Bhai Mani Singh and Bala also refer to Mardana's visit to Sultanpur. Sarup Das Bhalla says in his *Mahima Prakash* that Mahita Kalu sent Mardana to Sultanpur which appears correct. *Mahima Prakash* says: "Mardana, the balladeer, came (Mahita Kalu's) home and Kalu sent him to bring news."

76. The reference to Guru Nanak making Mardana perform *kirtan* at Sultanpur is made in the *Miharban Janamsakhi* as follows (p. 76, 81, App. J.S.P.): "At night Guru Nanak would perform and make others perform *kirtan*, and go for a bath early in the morning. After bathing at the river, he would meditate on remember God." Such a statement is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*. But this is in keeping with the nature of Guru Nanak.

77. In the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, this is the 41st Sakhi and is at the end of the first odyssey. There, it is stated that the Guru sent for this material for the marriage of a poor Khatri's daughter and that the event took place at Sultanpur since village Malsihan is quite nearby. *Bala* and *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhis* place this event at Sultanpur. The *Miharban* text does not contain Bhagirath and Mansukh episodes. Bhai Gurdas has also referred to Bhagirath and this lends credence to this story. Now the question remains as to when did this event take place. Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* says that when Nanak asked Mardana at Talwandi to go for travels in the country, he replied that he had a grown-up daughter and that he could go out only after marrying her off. When Nanak became a *Modi* with Daular Khan, Mardana again put forth his problem. Therefore, this event could have taken place at Sultanpur before Nanak embarked on the odysseys. *Bala Janamsakhi* and Bhai Santokh Singh's *Nanak Prakash* also make mention of sending for things for Mardana's daughter.

78. It is recorded in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* (p. 123, App. J.S.P.): "You get a list prepared of things that you need. I shall arrange for them."

that there is no delay in bringing this material in time for the marriage, Nanak directed Bhagirath not to spend more than one night at Lahore.⁷⁹

Bhagirath had a friend named Mansukh who was a trader at Lahore. Bhagirath put that paper before Mansukh and told him everything. Mansukh was able to collect all the things in a day but he was deeply influenced by this gesture. He thought what a great man he would be who was buying so many things to give away in the marriage of a poor man's daughter. He also appreciated the devotion of Bhagirath who was taking all these things for his *Guru* in the course of one single day. It was natural for Mansukh to ask Bhagirath many things about his *Guru*. He was so influenced by the personality of Nanak that he accompanied Bhagirath to Sultanpur so that he could also see the great man at whose feet his friend Bhagirath had sought shelter. Both of them reached Sultanpur. Mansukh felt elated on having seen Nanak and, like Bhagirath, he also became his disciple (sikh).⁸⁰

Mardana went back to Talwandi taking with him the things meant for his daughter's marriage. After marrying off his daughter he returned again to Sultanpur.⁸¹

Sulakhani (Nanak's Consort) at Sultanpur

When Nanak left Talwandi, he had told his wife that he would invite her to Sultanpur after he got an employment.⁸² After his appointment in the *Modikhana*, he sent for his wife from Talwandi. He hired a separate house in Sultanpur and made it the residence of his family. These days Gurdwara Guru Ka Bagh stands at that site.

79. The reference directing him not to spend more than one night in Lahore is found in *Vilayatvali, Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*.

80. The reference to Mansukh visiting Sultanpur and becoming a Sikh of the Guru is found in *Vilayatvali, Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*. There is no mention of Mansukh in the Miharban text. However, the tradition of Mansukh becoming a Sikh seems correct.

81. It seems that Mardana returned to Sultanpur after performing the marriage ceremonies of his daughter, because according to the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, he was at Sultanpur at the time when Nanak is stated to have disappeared in the *Bein rivulet*.

82. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that Nanak had told Sulakhani that he would send for her to Sultanpur as soon as he got employment. As per the *Bala Janamsakhi*, Nanak's betrothal and marriage took place at Sultanpur which does not appear to be correct.

Many ascetics, saints and faqirs flocked to the *Modikhana* because of the liberal temper of Nanak, the *Modi*. He would daily get some quota fixed for such holy men by Daulat Khan. Those who could not somehow be accommodated were taken by him to his own house and were offered food there. Thus, there was a crowd of ascetics and other holy men at the house of Nanak at both the meal-times.⁸³ When the parents-in-law of Nanak heard of this, they came to Sultanpur. They wanted him to lead life like any other worldly person and not throw away everything before the ascetics, mendicants and the poor.⁸⁴ The mother of Sulakhani and wife of Mula Chona, Chando Rani, met Nanaki and asked her to prevail upon her brother and stop him from indulging in such charities. She replied that Nanak gives alms out of what he earns and that the family has enough to spare.⁸⁵

Nanak Disappears in Rivulet Bein

While at Sultanpur, Guru Nanak would go daily to the Bein rivulet to have his bath. The place where he used to bathe was about half a mile (1.60 km.) west of the town. The scene around the banks of the rivulet was enchanting because of its natural beauty. Here he used to meditate for a while. According to a local tradition, there was a hut of a Muslim holy man, Allah Ditta (popularly known as *Kharbuje* Shah), nearby that place. Nanak used to have discourse with him once in a while. After Allah Ditta's demise, his tomb came up near the hut. This tomb remained extant till 1941 when the Maharaja of Kapurthala got constructed a *gurdwara* on that site, and named it Gurdwara Ber Sahib. A modest Sikh shrine built of small

83. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* (p. 8 of App.) records that "As food began to be prepared in the Baba's kitchen, they would come and sit outside his house. Although this kind of statement is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*, but this remains something in keeping with the aura that had been created round the personality of Nanak.

84. This detail is available in the *Bala Janamsakhi*. Although this is not confirmed by any other *Janamsakhi* accounts. It was natural for the parents to feel concerned for their daughter's house, especially when they had only one issue.

85. The details of this dialogue are not available in any *Janamsakhi* other except *Bala's* which gives vivid details of this aspect of the Guru's household life. The dialogue between Nanaki and Chando Rani is quite long but the essence of it is that somehow Nanak must cultivate attachment for his home. Nanaki being the Guru's elder sister and also being close to him felt herself responsible for his family's well-being.

sized bricks existed at the site before this new building came up.

One day Nanak got up early in the morning and went over to the Bein to have his bath. He was accompanied by an attendant with whom he left his clothes before he himself entered the rivulet to bathe in. When he did not come out for quite some time, the attendant raised a hue and cry that Nanak has got drowned. Soon the news spread throughout Sultanpur that Daulat Khan's *Modi* who had gone for a bath in the Bein, got drowned there. When Nanaki and Jai Ram heard this, they were much upset. As Daulat Khan learnt of this happening, he took Jai Ram along and reached the Bein. He asked the fishermen to put in their nets and try to get hold of the body.⁸⁶ All efforts yielded no trace of Nanak. Now he ordered that the accounts of the *Modikhana* be checked. As Jai Ram checked the accounts, he found everything in order. Some surplus grains found were kept aside.⁸⁷

It is likely that Nanak swam across the rivulet, went to the other bank and remained in communion with God. He re-appeared only after three days. It is not possible to describe the ecstasy of this state of realization.⁸⁸ He came out of the Bein at a place that was about one-and-a-half miles (2.80 kms.) away from the spot where he had entered the Bein. He was seen sitting in a cremation ground close by. The place from where Nanak is believed to have come out of the rivulet is now marked by Gurdwara Sant Ghat.

The people of Sultanpur were highly astonished and excited when they learnt about Nanak's return. The news spread around that Nanak has come to life after three days. Many said that it was a ghost

86. The *Bala Janamsakhi* makes mention of throwing in the nets, but none of the other *Janamsakhis* contain such a reference.

87. The fact of checking the accounts is also to be found only in *Bala Janamsakhi*.

88. Varied versions are found in different *Janamsakhis*. The *Vilayatvali* text (p. 9 of App. J.S.P.) records: "With the permission of God, the servants took [Nanak] to the Divine Court. They prayed that Nanak was present ... With the Divine sanction he was served a bowl full of nectar...." Similarly, the *Miharban* version also relates Nanak's attendance before *Akalpurakh* and being offered a bowl full of milk. At that moment are showered grace and compassion. Bhai Gurdas has described this state calling it the "Door of Compassion." As per the Mani Singh version, God asked Nanak that he should visit the centres of pilgrimages and make people remember the Divine Name. According to the *Vilayatvali* version, the *Mul Mantra* and the hymn entitled *Arti* were uttered at this time. The Mani Singh text says that the hymn *So Daru* was uttered at that time. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* does not specify any hymn to have been uttered at that time. It is recorded in the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Mani Singh that Guru Nanak emerged out of the *Bein* after eight days.

of Nanak who died three days back and now sits there in the cremation ground.

Thereafter Nanak, got up from the cremation ground and left for the *Modikhana*. He distributed among the ascetics and the poor, the surplus grains which were kept apart and which formed Guru Nanak's share. Many people gathered there and said that since Nanak had remained in the rivulet for three days, he had lost balance of mind and had gone crazy. After giving away all his belongings, Nanak went to sit among the faqirs.⁸⁹ When Guru Nanak's father-in-law learnt this, he came over to Sultanpur. On seeing Guru Nanak sitting in the cremation ground, he felt sad. He took a *pandit* along and tried to persuade Nanak, but all this had no effect on him.⁹⁰ Mula Chona was quite full of sorrow. He took his daughter Sulakhani and her son Lakhmi Das along to Pakkhoke. Nanaki herself undertook the guardianship of Sri Chand.⁹¹

'No Hindu, No Musalman'

The first words that Guru Nanak uttered after he came out of the Bein were "There is no Hindu and no Musalman." This caused a furore throughout Sultanpur. All were astonished on hearing these words because Sultanpur was a centre of Muslim learning⁹² and it was not devoid of danger to say so in the Muslim regime.⁹³ People went to Daulat Khan and informed him that Nanak was repeatedly uttering the words "there is no Hindu and no Musalman." Daulat Khan sent for Nanak. At the same time he sent for the *qazi* of the

89. This incident is not mentioned in *Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* have it and this appears to be in consonance with the happenings related in the anecdote.

90. The *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* and *Mani Singh* versions make no mention of Guru Nanak's father-in-law coming over to Sultanpur. But the occurrence so does not seem to be improbable. Surely, the father-in-law would not like his daughter's husband take to spiritual pursuits. The *Bala Janamsakhi* records that Mula Chona took along Shama Pandit and met Nanak. They had a long discussion with Nanak. The latter silenced Shama Pandit by a hymn which is not to be found in *Guru Granth Sahib*.

91. This fact is stated only in *Bala Janamsakhi*, but this does not seem to be unlikely as Nanaki had no issue of her own.

92. During the Lodhi regime, Sultanpur was a centre of Muslim learning. Later on, Mughal princes Dara and Aurangzeb received their early education here. See Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i-Punjab*, p. 192.

93. The reign of Sikandar Lodhi (1488-1517) was oppressive for the Hindus because during this time the temples of Nagarkot and Mathura were felled down. In

town.⁹⁴ When Nanak came to Daulat Khan, the *qazi* was already there. Seeing Nanak in an ascetic's robes, Daulat Khan gave him due respect and said that the *qazi* has a question to ask. Nanak looked at the *qazi* who asked: "You say that there is no Hindu and no Musalman. What is meant by this? Does the faith founded by Prophet Muhammad not exist?"⁹⁵ Nanak replied that it is difficult to be a Musalman. One has to live life as per the will of God. Getting one's mind cleansed of ego and inculcating compassion, mercy and love for all is the true path of religion and only the rare tread this path. Guru Nanak enunciated this in the following hymn:

Hard it is to deserve the name of Musalman—
Only one truly so, may such be called.
First, must he hold in love the way of the holy;
Like iron on grindstone should he cast off his possessions.
In the way of the Preceptor should he have faith,
And banish illusion of death and life.
To the Lord's will should he be obedient:
With faith in the Creator as compassionate he becomes,
May he be called a Mussalman. —Guru Granth Sahib, p.142

Five are the Muslim prayers; five their appointed hours,
Five their names.
These be the true prayers:
Truthfulness is the first, legitimate earning the second;
The third, prayer to God for universal weal.
The fourth is sincerity of heart and mind;
The fifth, laudation of God.
Recite the *Kalima* of noble acting—
Thus may one be truly called Mussalman.
Saith Nanak: Of all hypocrites, ignoble is the end.
—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 141

The *qazi* said, "Hindus have one path and the Muslims have another. Which path do you tread?" Nanak replied, "I am

► 1499, a Brahmin named Bodhan of Lucknow was got killed because he had claimed that Islam was true, and Hinduism was also true. See J. Briggs, *Rise of Mohammedan Power in India*, Calcutta, 1966, Vol. I, p. 330.

94. According to Moreland, during the Muslim regime a *qazi* was appointed in each town to provide justice and administration. See Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, 1929, p. 276.

95. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records the dialogue that is presumed to have taken place between Guru Nanak and the *qazi*. There appears to be a distinct possibility of such a happening in the context of narration of this episode.

on the path to God and God is neither Hindu nor Muslim.”⁹⁶ The *qazi* again said, “If you are on the path to God, it is now time to say the *namaz*: you may accompany us (to the mosque) and say the prayers.” Nanak agreed to go with him to say the *namaz*. Daulat Khan, the *qazi* and the Nanak went to the mosque to say *namaz*.⁹⁷

When Guru Nanak went to the mosque to say *namaz*, the Hindus of the town became apprehensive that the *qazi* and Daulat Khan might convert Nanak to Islam since they had succeeded in taking him to the mosque for the prayer. Jai Ram also shared similar apprehensions with Nanaki as he came home. Nanaki was a person with firm faith and she was sure of her brother’s commitment. So she allayed Jai Ram’s fears on Nanak’s count.⁹⁸

The *qazi*, Daulat Khan and Nanak stood in a row. The *qazi* and Daulat Khan began saying their *namaz* and Nanak only attentively looked at them. Once he looked at the *qazi* and laughed because he had a strong insight to assume that the *qazi*’s mind was not in the *namaz*, rather it was in something else. When the *namaz* was over, the *qazi* asked Nanak in a furious tone, “O Nanak ! why did you laugh at my saying the *namaz* ?” Nanak patiently replied, “Your *namaz* has not been accepted (in the Divine Court) because your mind was somewhere else. Since you yourself were not present in the *namaz*, I could not have been with you in saying it.”⁹⁹ This enraged the *qazi* furthermore, and he declared that his mind was very much in the prayer, but you were laughing standing nearby. Nanak said that it was not necessary that mere physical bowing could mean homage to God. It was the mind that had to pay the homage, and that one could do any way. Similarly, if mind was in the *namaz*, one might say it any way; but if the mind was not in the prayer and was rather anxious about the new-born filly at home, such saying of *namaz* was of no use. Listening this, the *qazi* was astonished. He realized that Nanak had correctly assessed his mental state. Finding

96. These questions and answers are mentioned in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. They are not found in any other *Janamsakhi*.

97. All the *Janamsakhi* versions agree that Guru Nanak went to the mosque, along with the *qazi*, to say the *namaz*. It has to be taken as correct.

98. This detail is given only in the *Bala Janamsakhi*, and in no one else. But this dialogue fits into the given situation.

99. This event is mentioned in all the *Janamsakhi* versions.

qazi in such bewilderment, Daulat Khan asked *qazi* the reason of his silence. He replied, what Nanak had said was right.¹⁰⁰

Listening this, Daulat Khan was also highly surprised. He again asked the *qazi* if it was true that his mind wandered to the new-born filly at home while he was saying *namaz* in the mosque. The *qazi* replied that Nanak had the correct insight. Both the *qazi* and Daulat Khan were surprised.¹⁰¹

Receiving Rebeck from Bhai Phiranda

Guru Nanak prepared himself physically as well as mentally before undertaking long journeys to preach the True Name (*Satinam*). After the Bein episode, he did not return home and thus broke off all attachment with the family.¹⁰² He meditated, lessened his daily food intake and began living on cow milk alone.¹⁰³ Mardana was ever with him. While at Talwandi, Guru Nanak improvised a musical instrument with the reed which played like a rebeck. Mardana had pleased Nanak by singing hymns to the accompaniment of this instrument.¹⁰⁴

Guru Nanak felt that Mardana was in need of rebeck. The rebeck, a musical instrument made of wood and steel strings, was

100. This episode is mentioned in all the *Janamsakhi* versions. The *Bala Janamsakhi* records that Daulat Khan asked the Nanak that he could have said the *namaz* with him if the *qazi* had not been saying his. In reply, Nanak told him (Daulat Khan) that he himself was then buying horses in Kabul and Kandahar. At this Daulat Khan also became silent.

101. Bhai Gurdas in his *Var XI* makes the following reference to Daulat Khan : "Daulat Khan was a virtuous person, a Muslim holy man, Jind, was also there who was beyond death." Mufti Ghulam Sarvar's *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i-Punjab* (pp.28-29) says that Shaikh Badr-ud-Din Sherwani was called Jind Pir. He was a man of considerable influence. Bahlol Lodhi's daughter was married to him. He got several villages in *jagir* with which he founded the Malerkotla State. He died in A.D. 1515. See also Griffin's *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, 1940, Vol. II, p. 529. Bhai Randhir Singh says that Shaikh Badr-ud-Din Jind Pir was the *qazi* at Sultanpur when Guru Nanak went into the mosque to say *namaz*. However, this fact is not supported by any other source.

102. See *Dabistan*, Naval Kishore Press, Kanpur, p. 223 (broke off all attachment with wife and son(s)).

103. *Ibid.* (At last Nanak practised severe austerities and meditation. First, he decreased his intake of food. Then lived on cow milk. Thereafter he massaged with *ghee* and lived on water alone. Such a person is called *pavan-ahari* or one who lives on air only).

104. Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, Amritsar, p. 9.

not easily available then. On enquiry, it became known that Bhai Phiranda, a native of village Bharoana towards the south-west of Sultanpur, possessed a rebeck and that he might part with it if so requested. Guru Nanak asked Mardana to get some money from sister Nanaki and then meet Phiranda and bring the rebeck.¹⁰⁵ Mardana went to Bharoana. This village these days falls in the Beas basin where the Bein rivulet falls in the Beas. Now a *gurdwara* stands there in the memory of Bhai Phiranda. The latter himself came to Sultanpur and gave his rebeck to Nanak.¹⁰⁶

Bhai Lalo

Mardana expressed a desire to meet his family before embarking on a long journey. Nanak left Sultanpur and reached Sayyadpur (Saidpur) Saloi which has since been renamed Eminabad (in Gujranwala district of Pakistan).¹⁰⁷ Here lived Bhai Lalo who was a carpenter by profession.¹⁰⁸ Guru Nanak stayed with him and from here Mardana went over to Talwandi to meet his family.¹⁰⁹ Walking through short-cut routes, Talwandi was not more than 20-25 miles (40 kms.) from here.¹¹⁰

105. The reference to asking for money from Nanaki is found in the *Bala Janamsakhi* only and nowhere else.

106. The episode of getting rebeck from Bhai Phiranda is also mentioned only in *Bala Janamsakhi*. In village Bharoana, (present-day Kapurthala district) stands a shrine (Gurdwara) of Bhai Phiranda commemorating this episode.

107. Babur, in his *Tuzki-Babari*, refers to this village as Sayyadpur, but the *Vilayatnawli* and the *Miharban* versions of the *Janamsakhis* call it Saidpur. Sher Shah Suri had razed this town to ground in the 16th century and had founded Shergarh on the site. The debris of this village can still be seen one mile (1.60 kms.) south-west of the present town. Amin Beg, a general of Emperor Humayun devastated this town and with its debris erected a new township, which he named Eminabad. See *Gujranwala District Gazetteer*, 1935, p. 354.

108. According to Bhai Kahn Singh, Bhai Lalo was a devotee who was a carpenter of Ghataura sub-caste. He had no son. He had only one daughter whose descendants lived in Tatla village (District Gujranwala now in Pakistan). See *Mahan Kosh*, p. 1065 (1974 reprint).

109. It seems that one purpose of Guru Nanak's visit to Eminabad was that Mardana should get an opportunity to meet his family before proceeding on long journey. Nanak himself did not go to Talwandi because he knew that his family members were upset at his decision to undertake spiritual pursuits. Bhai Mardana's visit to Talwandi is recorded in the *Bala Janamsakhi* which seems probable.

110. Eminabad is about 8 miles (about 13 kms.) from Gujranwala and 35 miles (56 kms.) from Lahore. Nankana Sahib is also 35 miles (56 kms.) from Lahore. Nankana Sahib from Eminabad via Shahadra is about sixty miles (96 kms.) by rail.

During his stay with Bhai Lalo, Guru Nanak would daily go out and remain absorbed in communion with God throughout the day away from the village. In preparation of a long journey, he also began to condition his body, by taking little food and living in rough environs. He used to sit on hard pebbles and meditate.¹¹¹ According to a local tradition, this place is now marked by Gurdwara Rori Sahib.¹¹² Before Pakistan came into existence, devotees from far and near used to throng this place.

During the Guru's stay with Bhai Lalo, a feudal lord of Sayyadpur, Malik Bhago, arranged a *brahm-bhoj* (feast for the holy). People from all the *varnas* (castes) were invited to take meals. This feudal chief committed all sorts of tyrannies on the people who were fed up with him. An invitation was also sent to Nanak, but he did not respond.¹¹³ The caste-conscious Brahmins made a complaint to Malik Bhago saying that Nanak was a faqir and that he had not partaken of food in the *brahm-bhoj*. Malik Bhago sent for Nanak. Nanak, along with Bhai Lalo went to Malik Bhago, who wanted to know as to why he did not join the *brahm-bhoj*. The Guru boldly replied that he saw the blood of the poor in his victuals. Then he asked the Guru as to why he stayed with Lalo of the low caste. To this Guru Nanak replied that the coarse bread of Lalo was milk-like to him because Lalo earns by honest labour. At this, Malik Bhago got infuriated, but others who had gathered there advised restraint as at the time of the *brahm-bhoj*, no faqir or ascetic was to be spoken to in a disparaging tone. Guru Nanak left Malik Bhago's place and returned to Bhai Lalo.

111. Bhai Gurdas (*Varan*, I:24) says :

"After having been bestowed with the grace of God, Baba Nanak began to practice austerities. He lived on bitter wild plant; *Calotropis procera* and sand, pebbles on earth remained his bedding. Long spells of penances enabled him to have proximity to God."

References to austerities and meditation are found in the *Dabistan* as well, as we have said earlier. According to a local tradition, Eminabad was the place where Nanak meditated.

112. Maharaja Ranjit Singh on his way from Lahore to Peshawar visited this shrine and made special offerings. See Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Daftar III, Tr. V.S. Suri, 1961, p. 257.

113. According to the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, the episode of *brahm-bhoj* took place at Lahore, and not at Sayyadpur, during the later years of Guru Nanak's life, but the *Bala Janamsakhi* says that it took place at Sayyadpur (Eminabad). The Sikhs in general believe that this incident took place at Eminabad.

After a few days Mardana came back from Talwandi. Thereafter the Guru sought Bhai Lalo's permission to move further ahead.

Sajjan, The Swindler

While at Talwandi, Mardana had once seen a group of pilgrims that was going to Pakpattan for *ziarat* (pilgrimage) at the tomb of Shaikh Farid Shakarganj. At that time Mardana asked Guru Nanak to take him to Pakpattan.¹¹⁴ Guru Nanak left Sayyadpur for Pakpattan so as to fulfil Mardana's wish.

Those days one who wanted to go to Pakpattan from Sayyadpur had first to take the road leading to Lahore and thence the one leading to Multan. Both Lahore and Multan were capital towns of their respective *Subas* and both had different governors. Both these principal towns were connected by road. Besides, boats also ferried in the Ravi from Lahore to Multan, and traders used to transport their wares by them.¹¹⁵ Travelling from Lahore to Multan either by boat or road transport, one passed through an important town Tulamba on the bank of the Ravi. The town has since got a new name : Makhdoompur (district Multan). There was no inn around Tulamba where the passengers could halt. One inn was constructed during the regime of Emperor Shah Jahan which was ravaged by the Ravi waters in 1750.¹¹⁶ Around the time Guru Nanak lived there was no inn at this place. Therefore, a swindler by the name of Sajjan¹¹⁷ got a private inn constructed outside the town. Herein he also erected

114. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* records : "One day Mardana, the *Mirasi*, came to meet Baba Nanak when the people were going for *ziarat* of Shaikh Farid's (shrine). Mardana asked Guru Nanak that he would also perform *ziarat* if he (the Guru) accompanied him. To this Guru Nanak replied that he would go if Mardana accompanied him permanently. *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi*. (App. J.S.P., 332).

115. F.C. Arora, *Commerce by Rivers in the Punjab*, Pb. Govt. Office, Lahore, 1930, pp. 92-93.

116. *Multan District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1923-24, p. 283.

117. A manuscript copy of the *Bala Janamsakhi*, dated A.d. 1658, says that Sajjan belonged to Tulamba. Bhai Santokh Singh (*Nanak Prakash*) also makes a similar statement. The *Miharban* version says that this episode took place in the South. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* does not specify any place but puts it prior to the Guru's visit to Panipat and Delhi : this comes nearer to Tulamba. The *Miharban* text refers to water-pitchers having been placed there for both Hindus and Muslims. Bhai Mani Singh's version declares Sajjan to be of a place around Hastanapur. This place does not seem Delhi because it comes after Nanakmatta (District Nainital) and

a temple (*Thakur Dwara*) as well as a mosque. He would take innocent passengers to his inn and kill them to deprive them of their belongings. Pitchers of water were placed on the roadside which were marked for both Hindus and Muslims.

When Guru Nanak went by that road, he was also invited to halt for the night.¹¹⁸ Sajjan offered the Guru food, manifested the feelings of selfless service and then asked the Guru to go to sleep since he might be feeling tired. The Guru, however, guessed his real intentions. He gauged the mean thoughts in Sajjan's mind. He asked Mardana to play the rebeck and uttered the following hymn¹¹⁹:

Tinned copper so bright and lustrous,
When rubbed, appears a surface inky black.
Its impurity by washing shall not go, despite washing a hundred times.
Those are true friends who are one's companions of the way;
And when their reckoning is called for, instantly render it. (I Pause)
Chambers, domes and bowers, painted all over,
When crumbled are little good, *found* deserted within.
Storks white-robed that at holy spots abide,
Gripping creatures swallow them—such immaculate cannot be called.
Like the cotton-wool tree is my body, that deludes parrots.
Useless its fruit—
Such are my qualities.
I the blind man, carrying a heavy load, a long mountain-path have
to traverse.
Nothing with my eyes can I behold—
How may I ascend this path to cross?
What good other devotion, merits and clever devices?
Saith Nanak: Contemplate thou the Name, whereby from bonds
mayst thou be freed. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 729

This hymn left a deep impact on Sajjan. Each verse of it seemed to have washed off the evil that had got embedded in his mind. Sajjan thought that all the evils referred to in this hymn were within him,

before Benaras. So nothing can be said about it. The Sikh perception takes Nanak's meeting Sajjan at Tulamba as correct. However, swindlers can be met at any other place also and at more than one place.

118. The *Miharban*, *Vilayatvali* and *Mani Singh* versions refer to Sajjan's asking the Guru to stay in the temple which seems correct. As per the *Bala Janamsakhi* and *Nanak Prakash*, Sajjan had imprisoned Mardana's son, Shahzada, and Guru Nanak goes there to get him released.

119. The *Vilayatvali*, the *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions of the *Janamsakhis* as also *Nanak Prakash* state that the Guru uttered this hymn here.

and this holy person could read his inner mind. As such he fell at the Guru's feet and wept bitterly. He realized his vices and he became a noble, honest person.¹²⁰ The Guru stayed with him overnight and then went ahead.

Pakpatan

Pakpatan (in the present day district of Sahiwal in Pakistani Punjab) has been a famous ford on a bank of the Satluj.¹²¹ Two roads coming from the west join here. One of them led to Pakpatan via Dera Ismail Khan, Multan, Shorkot and Harrapa whereas the second one led to Pakpatan via Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan. Since both the roads joined together at this famous ford, people like Sabuktudin, Mahmood of Ghazni, famous traveller Ibn Batuta and Taimur passed through here. Pakpatan is famous as 'Pakpatan Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar (Shakarganj).' Here stood the tomb of Shaikh Farid and devotees from far and near came to pay their homage. It is said that Shaikh Farid's loaf made of wood and some dates are still preserved there.¹²² It was also as a result of his respect for Farid that Taimur had forbidden his forces from ransacking this town. At that time Pakpatan was known as Ajodhan. Later on, it being a place sacred to the memory of Farid came to be called Pakpatan.¹²³ It is said that Shaikh Farid came to this place in the thirteenth century first of all. At that time a *jogi* by the name of Bir Nath lived here. At first, he challenged Farid, but later on he became Farid's disciple. He got converted to Islam and became popular as Pir Kamal.¹²⁴ From Tulamba, Guru Nanak reached Harrappa which was not far away towards the north. Then he reached Pakpatan passing through

120. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that Sajjan gave away all his ill-gotten wealth in charity, sought forgiveness for his sins and became a noble person for ever. The *Miharban* version states that Sajjan fell at the Guru's feet and wept profusely, and thus wiped off the filth of sins from his mind with tears (of repentance). Thereafter he pulled down all the buildings he had erected to swindle the people.

121. *Montgomery District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1933, p. 65.

122. *Ibid.*, footnote of p.31.

123. *Ibid.*

124. *Montgomery District Gazetteer*, p. 65. The name of Pir Kamal also occurs in the *Janamsakhis*, but both of them cannot possibly be the same person; since this Pir Kamal belongs to the 13th Century. Arnold's *Preaching of Islam in India* records that Shaikh Farid converted sixteen tribes of the area to Islam.

Dera Ismail Khan and Shorkot.¹²⁵ He sat in a jungle outside the town. At that time Shaikh Ibrahim adorned the spiritual seat of Shaikh Farid.¹²⁶ This Shaikh Ibrahim is referred to as Shaikh Braham in the *Janamsakhis*. One of his disciples was Shaikh Kamal. He came to the jungle to collect firewood and saw Guru Nanak and Mardana singing hymns. Leaving aside, his task of collecting

125. We come across, two episodes (*Sakhis*) recorded in the *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis*. One of them is related to Shaikh Farid and the other to Shaikh Ibrahim. In the *sakhi* of Shaikh Ibrahim, he is stated to be Shaikh Farid's grandson. On the basis of this Bhai Vir Singh has said that Shaikh Farid might be some other person who met Guru Nanak in the *Asa* country. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* elucidates this point. It records that the Guru went to Pakpatan twice—once when he was quite young and then during his mature days. This seems correct.

In the *sakhi* relating to meeting with Farid, there is no mention of the route followed by Guru Nanak to reach Pakpatan. *Vilayatvali* and *Bala Janamsakhis* say that the Guru was sitting in the forest of the *Asa* country when Farid came and met him. In both these *Janamsakhis* the *sakhi* of Farid comes first.

In the *sakhi* of Shaikh Ibrahim as recorded in the *Vilayatvali*, *Miharban* and *Bala Janamsakhis*, the route followed by the Guru is mentioned. The *Vilayatvali* version says (in the beginning of the second odyssey and while leaving Talwandi) : "Then Guru Baba Nanak set out from there. Finding the Ravi and the Chenab nearby, he went to an isolated place and reached Pakpatan." If the Guru took the road from Lahore via Multan, this path leads to Tulamba going parallel to Ravi. If the Guru had reached Tulamba by boat, even then seeing the Ravi is correct since he came to Pakpatan direct from Talwandi. The fact of seeing Chenab close by does not seem correct. The *Miharban* text says : "setting out from Talwandi, Rai Bhoi, passing through places like Garba, Mani Gopal twining through Khanpur Sehande, Mithe Arain, Satghare, the land of Majha on the Ravi, landed at about two Kos (about 5 kms.) from Farid's Patan."

As per the *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* versions, the Guru started from Talwandi, but here it is recorded that he came through the Ravi and the Beas which means that the Guru first came to Sultanpur and thence to the bank of Satluj which does not seem correct. Its second connotation could be that he came through the Ravi and the Beas. According to Alexander Cunningham, Beas merged in the Ravi in olden times. The names mentioned on this route seem correct. Satghara is in Montgomery (modern Sahiwal) district.

The *Bala Janamsakhi* records that he reached Pakpatan via Uch Sharif (Bahawalpur, Pakistan) which does not seem correct because this village does not fall on the way if one travels to Pakpatan from Talwandi or Sayyadpur.

126. The following were the descendants of Shaikh-Farid-ud-Din Mahmood, who were contemporary or near-contemporary of Guru Nanak : (1) Shaikh Ahmed in the ninth generation, (2) Shaikh Ata Ulah in the tenth generation, (3) Shaikh Mohammad in the eleventh generation, (4) Shaikh Ibrahim Farid Sani in the twelfth generation who occupied the spiritual seat for more than forty years. See *Montgomery District Gazetteer*, p. 67. Since he sat on the spiritual seat of Farid, he has also been referred to as Farid in the *Janamsakhi* literature.

firewood he came up to them. At that time the following hymn was being sung¹²⁷ :

Thou, the sole doer, all existence is of Thy making.

—Guru Granth Sahib, Sloka, p. 1291

At first Shaikh Kamal did not understand the hymn, but he requested the Guru to recite it once again. Thus he remembered the hymn. He threw the woods aside and went to his teacher to tell him that a faqir has arrived who is accompanied by a rebeck-player and that the faqir sings his own verse. He also told that he had remembered the above couplet.¹²⁸

Shaikh Ibrahim found the couplet to be strange because according to the Islamic thought there is one God and after Him is Muhammad, His prophet. The first verse of the statement of Islamic creed *Kalma* also reads thus. The teacher asked Kamal if that faqir was a Hindu or Muslim. Kamal replied that he was a Hindu. He was highly astonished that a Hindu faqir could be so committed to the unity of God. Next day Kamal and his teacher both came to see Guru Nanak¹²⁹ and took him to the monastery.

After taking Guru Nanak and Mardana to the monastery, Shaikh Ibrahim recited the couplets of Shaikh Farid to them,¹³⁰

127. It is recorded in all the *Janamsakhis* that Guru Nanak and Mardana were singing this hymn when Shaikh Kamal came to them.

128. In both the *Vilayatwali* and the *Miharban* versions, the episode has been given as above.

129. This account is similarly given in *Miharban* and *Vilayatwali*.

130. The *Vilayatwali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* record the questions-answers with Guru Nanak in the *sakhis* of Farid and Shaikh Ibrahim in verse. A similar reference is made in the *Miharban* text. This proves that the Guru listened to the couplets of Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar and then under their influence composed some hymns. We have told about this subject in detail in the *sakhi* of Shaikh Ibrahim when the Guru again visited Pakpatan.

There seems to be no doubt in this that Guru Nanak did possess hymns of Shaikh Farid because the hymns of Farid as included in the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the hymns of Guru Nanak are quite identical. For example, Shaikh Farid's hymn in *Subi* measure :

Listen, thou Man ! thou didst not look to the tackle of thy boat while it was yet time.

In the swollen lake how shall it float ?

Beloved ! touch not *the world's pleasures*, frail like *Kasumbha*,

At a touch withering away. (1-Pause)

This frail life-female is a tremble under the master's stern reprimand.

With youth passing, never again will the breast be brimful of milk,

which were liked very much by Guru Nanak. The Guru stayed here for a while and then set out towards east.

Kurukshetra

Leaving Pakpattan, Guru Nanak crossed the Satluj and took the road leading to Delhi via Sirsa and Hansi.¹³¹ In Sirsa there is an old Gurdwara commemorating the visit of Guru Nanak.¹³² From Sirsa, another road led to Thanesar.¹³³ Taking the road to Thanesar, Guru Nanak reached Kurukshetra passing through Kara and Pehowa. The village Kara is situated in Kaithal district of modern Haryana and is seven miles (11.2 kms) west of Pehowa. Here Raja Udai Singh (also called Bhai) a Sikh ruler of Kaithal state got built a gurdwara in the memory of Guru Nanak. Pehowa is a centre of pilgrimage for Hindus. It is believed that river Saraswati once flowed through here. This place is twenty miles (32 kms.) west of Kurukshetra. As per a local tradition, the Pandavas performed the last rites of their kin here after the fierce battle of Kurukshetra. At first Raja Udai Singh and then the local *Sangat* built a *gurdwara* here in the memory of Guru Nanak. There is a spring of Guru Nanak's time which continues to ooze water. This is believed to have sprouted in old bed of Saraswati river. Later on Guru Hargobind got a *baoli* built over this spring.

Kurukshetra is the name of that important site where, according to the Mahabharata, the Kauravas and the Pandavas fought a war. It is situated south of Thanesar, forty miles (64 kms.) north of Panipat and thirty miles (48 kms.) south of Ambala. Heun Tsang has recorded it as "Dharam-Khetra."¹³⁴ Guru Nanak reached Kurukshetra at the time of the solar-eclipse.¹³⁵ He sat on a high

➤ Never again union in love.
Saith Nanak : Listen, sisters of my soul !
As the Lord makes the call,
Life's swan its reluctant flight shall take;
This frame turning a dust heap.

131. Sita Ram Kohli, *Historical Atlas of India*, Allahabad, 1954, p. 15.

132. Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, Patiala, 1960, p. 123.

133. Sita Ram Kohli, *op.cit.*

134. Alexander Cunningham, *Report of a Tour in the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1882, p. 87.

135. The *Bala* and the *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* record that Guru Nanak reached Kurukshetra at the time of solar-eclipse. According to Miharban, Guru Nanak went to Kurukshetra from Kartarpur which shows that the episode took place much later. According to the *Miharban* version, the Guru came from Mathura and ➤

mound. The site where the Guru sat was got discovered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He purchased the land and got a *gurdwara* built there. The shrine is named *Gurdwara Sidh Bati*. The building of this shrine is built of small bricks and seems to be more than a hundred years old. The well nearby is also bricklined with small bricks. This site is just near the Kurukshetra *Sarowar* (tank) and the boundary of the *gurdwara* touches the boundary of the Kurukshetra University Campus.

When Guru Nanak sat near the sacred pool of Kurukshetra, a prince and his mother came there.¹³⁶ The prince did not know about the fair on the day of solar eclipse. So he brought along the body of the deer he had hunted down on his way. He offered that deer to Guru Nanak. The Guru was touched by the devotion of the prince and accepted his offer. He asked for an earthen kettle and wanted to put it on fire so as to cook the meat.¹³⁷ As they did so, the *pandas* rushed to the site seeing smoke coming from there. Some of them were got aggressive and they started a quarrel with the Guru as to why he had started cooking during the solar eclipse. They were further enraged on learning that it was the meat of a deer that was being cooked. The Guru counselled them patience and told them that it was not proper to quarrel with anyone during the solar eclipse. Among them was a *pandit* by the name of Nanu Mal who considered himself very clever. So he surged ahead of others and began arguing with the Guru with his sharp tongue. The Guru in reply uttered the following hymn :

☛ according to Bhai Mani Singh, he came from Sultanpur. The *Miharban* text also records that first of all, Guru Nanak went to the Ganges (Haridwar) and that Kurukshetra fell on the way while going to the Ganges from the Punjab. Guru Ram Das has also referred to Guru Amar Das first visiting Kurukshetra and then the Ganges. See *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1116-17.

136. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* says that he was the king of Patna which does not seem to be correct because Patna (the present capital of Bihar State) is quite far off from Kurukshetra. He can possibly be a chief from a nearby state. A village named Patanvala existed at the site where now thrives the city of Patiala. See Kirpal Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh and His Times*, p.77. Maybe, he was the chief of Patanvala.

137. The *Bala Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak brought fish and put it on fire for cooking which does not seem to be correct. The *Miharban* version is silent about the episode of cooking meat, rather it says that the *pandits* had a discourse with Guru Nanak about the use of bathing on pilgrim centres. The *Janamsakhis* of Bhai Bala and Bhai Mani Singh record the episode of cooking meat which seems more probable.

Born out of flesh, in flesh does *man* live.
 With life comes love of flesh, bones, skin, limbs—
 All are flesh.
 As from flesh the living body issues, the breast that is flesh.
 It grasps in mouth.
 Of flesh is the mouth, of flesh the tongue,
 Through flesh is breath *drawn*.
 As is man grown up, matrimony he enters,
 And brings home flesh.
 Of flesh is born flesh,
 With flesh are all relationships established.
 By touch of the holy Preceptor is the Divine Ordinance realized.
 Whereby comes fulfilment.
 Not by man's own effort comes liberation :
 Saith Nanak : Such talk only to perdition leads.

—*Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1290*

Over the fetish of flesh dispute blind fools,
 Of enlightenment and contemplation ignorant.
 Which is flesh, which vegetation ?
 Which to sin leads ?
 After the tradition of the gods, was the rhinoceros slaughtered,
 And *of its flesh* burnt sacrifice offered.
 Those that at night-time gobble up flesh,
 Pose to discard flesh and stop their noses.
 A great show of piety they make before others—
 Of enlightenment and contemplation ignorant.
 Saith Nanak : What avail arguing with the purblind.
 Neither would they say anything sensible,
 Nor follow whatever is told them.
 Truly blind is one whose actions are blind—
 The mind's eye he lacks
 From mother's and father's blood are they born,
 Yet flesh and flesh they abjure.
 As at night come woman and man together,
 Foul is their conduct.
 Of flesh are we begotten, from flesh born;
 Of flesh are we vessels.
 Brahmin ! ignorant of enlightenment and contemplation,
 Thou art yet reputed to be wise.
 Revered Sir ! the flesh that is brought from outside dost thou discard.
 But those in thy home, of flesh made, thou thinkst good.
 From flesh are all living objects made.
 In flesh is life lodged.

Those by the false preceptor *instructed*;
 Consume what is forbidden and discard what is lawful to each;
 Know, that of flesh are we begotten, from flesh born;
 Of flesh are we vessels.
 Brahmin ! ignorant of enlightenment and contemplation,
 Thou art yet reputed to be wise.
 In Puranas and in Muslim books is *consuming* flesh commended;
 In all Four Ages is flesh in general use.
 In sacrifices and in fine wedding ceremonials
 In *use* of flesh in vogue.
 Women and men, of flesh are born,
 As also kings and great potentates.
 Shouldst thou feel to hell are they wending their way,
 Receive thou not their charity.
 What absurdity that the donor to hell may go,
 While the recipient to enter heaven is *believed*.
 Brahmin ! thou knowest not where from is flesh born :
 From water grows grain, sugarcane and cotton;
 From water is the world reckoned born.
 Water claims to be pure, yet from water comes much that arouses evil.
 Saith Nanak after contemplation :
 Shouldst thou discard all such delectable objects,
 Mayst thou claim to have exercised true renunciation.

—Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 1290-91

Listening to the ideas of Guru Nanak, Pandit Nanu and his companions were much impressed. The Guru halted there at Kurukshetra for sometime and then proceeded further.

Haridwar

The passage from Kurukshetra to Haridwar seems quite old. People of the Punjab often went to the Ganges via Kurukshetra. Giving a detailed description of the path followed by Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das has said :

First came the holy preceptor to Kurukshetra, holy occasion solemnized.... Next went the Master to Jamuna where the name Divine was chanted.... In the third place the master came to the Ganga where happened a wonder.¹³⁸

Leaving Kurukshetra, people had to first travel on what is now Pipli, Ladwa, Jagadhari road and then cross the Yamuna. Thence they

¹³⁸. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1116.

reached the Ganges. Thus, Guru Nanak after crossing the Yamuna reached the bank of Ganges river at what is now called Haridwar.¹³⁹

At the time of Guru Nanak, the present day town of Haridwar did not exist. Heun Tsang has recorded this place as 'MaULO'¹⁴⁰ and the *Ain-i-Akbari* calls it Mayapur.¹⁴¹

Guru Ram Das has also referred to Kurukshetra but has made no mention of Haridwar.¹⁴² The devotees of Shiva call Haridwar 'the door of Shiva' and those of Vishnu call it Haridwar or door of Vishnu and Hari-ki-Pauri. Guru Nanak stayed about one-and-a-half furlong away from this Hari-ki-Pauri. There was no habitation around there then. The site where the Guru is said to have halted got the name 'Nanak Vara' or 'Nanak Bara'.¹⁴³ A shrine exists there. The building is made of small bricks and is now occupied by some celibate mendicants (*Udasis*). They have installed there a huge portrait of Guru Nanak. The seat of *Dera* head is now occupied by a disciple of Bhagat Bhagwan.¹⁴⁴ Bhagat Bhagwan was a Sikh preacher of Guru Har Rai's time: the Guru gave him this name and he preached Sikh tenets in far-flung regions.¹⁴⁵ It seems Guru Har Rai located this site and gave the responsibility of looking after it to Bhagat Bhagwan.¹⁴⁶

When Guru Nanak reached Haridwar, there was a considerable rush of pilgrims because of the Vaisakhi fair. The Guru stood in the waters of the river. All the pilgrims bathing there were offering water

139. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* do not mention Guru Nanak's visit to Haridwar. However, this *sakhi* is found recorded in the *Janamsakhis* of both Miharban and Mani Singh. The details in both these versions are similar. Both record that the Guru reached Haridwar on the day of Vaisakhi.

140. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1908, Vol. 13, p.51.

141. *Ibid.*

142. Guru Amar Das stayed at Kankhal, near Haridwar. Here a *gurdwara* commemorates his visit. Kankhal is an ancient place which has been referred to even by poet Kalidas in his *Meghdoot*.

143. In Haridwar, this seems to be the only old Sikh centre.

144. The present Udasi Swami Sant Ram has given his genealogy as under :
Baba Bhagat Bhagwan, Baba Narain Das, Baba Balak Das, Baba Jogi Das, Baba Das, Baba Brahm Hasmukh Das, Baba Jai Prakash, Baba Ram Sharan, Baba Mangani Ram, Baba Bhagat Ram, Baba Atma Ram, Baba Moti Ram, Baba Puran Das, Udasi Swami Sant Ram.

145. Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 675.

146. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* make no mention of the Guru reaching there on the Vaisakhi day; there is also no mention of the Haridwar *sakhi*. Only *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions refer to his visit which seems to be correct.

to the sun (towards the east) but Guru Nanak began throwing water westwards. At this, people were astonished and some created a furore. Someone said that he might be a Muslim. During the course of these proceedings, someone suggested that he be asked as to why he offered water westwards. Therefore, some persons went upto him and asked : "O devotee of God ! why do you offer water westwards ?" In reply the Guru put them a question : "Why do you throw water towards the Sun ?" The pilgrims told him that they offered water to their forefathers. The Guru asked them as to where their forefathers lived. They told him that they were in the other world, about 490 million *kos* farther away. The Guru wanted to know if the water reached them to which they replied in the affirmative. The Guru now told them that he had lands near Lahore and he was sending water thereto. They all laughed saying that Lahore was too far off for the water to reach there. How can this water reach the lands near Lahore ? The Guru replied that it will reach there in the same way as their water reached their forefathers.¹⁴⁷ The Guru sojourned at Haridwar for some time and then went ahead.

Nanakmatta

The Imperial Gazetteer of India records that the passage for pilgrims to religious shrines in the Kumaon hills passed through Haridwar.¹⁴⁸ The details of this passage have been provided in Charles A. Cherring's *Western Tibet and the British Borderland*. Mr. Cherring had been Deputy Commissioner of Almora district for several years. He records : "Hindu pilgrims usually travelled from the east along Tanakpur (modern Nainital, Uttaranchal) near the Nepal border and river Sharda which is also called black (Kala) river crossed Jephu pass to reach Mansarovar and circumambulating the Kailash mountain reached Haridwar. Those who started from Haridwar in summer they reached Jephu Lekh pass after visiting Badri Nath and Kedar Nath."¹⁴⁹

147. In the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, this dialogue has been given in this very manner. In Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* the reference is to give water to the garden near Lahore. The central point in both the *sakhis* remains the same.

148. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1908, Vol. 13, p. 51.

149. Charles A. Cherring, *Western Tibet and the British Borderland*, London, 1906, pp. 49-51.

This was a shorter route to reach the Terai region from Haridwar without having to go to Mansarovar and Kailash. Guru Nanak took this route to reach Gorakhmatta.

From Haridwar, Guru Nanak went on to Kankhal. That was perhaps why Guru Amar Das also stayed at Kankhal. From Kankhal, a hilly pathway led to Kot Duar. The Guru went to Kot Duar from Kankhal. There is an old *gurdwara* at Kot Duar in commemoration of the Guru's visit: it is named Gurdwara Charanpadaka.¹⁵⁰ According to a local tradition, Guru Nanak had sanctified this place with his visit. From Kot Duar, a direct hilly pathway leads to Srinagar (Pauri). The town of Srinagar was the capital of Garhwal state. Here also existed an old shrine, Gurdwara Charanpadaka, in memory of the Guru's visit. The building of this shrine was found intact even after the floods of A.D. 1803,¹⁵¹ because it is found mentioned in Tara Singh Narotam's *Gur Tirath Sangrah*. From Srinagar, the Guru went over to Badrinath and Kedarnath.¹⁵² From Kedarnath, the Guru took the route that now leads to Joshi Math and passing through Antdhura reached near Lepulekh. Beyond Srinagar no *gurdwara* or shrine built in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit is traceable.

Towards the south of the present day Almora district, the Nainital district touches the western boundary of Nepal. Along the Nepal border on the Indian side flowed the Kali river. It is also called the Sharda river. From Lepulekh, a passage leads to Almora alongside this river.¹⁵³ On the southern flank of Lepulekh on a hilly pathway there was a town now known as Haldwani Mani.¹⁵⁴ Thirty-three miles (53 kms.) towards east from Haldwani; passing through Durga Pipal,¹⁵⁵ one can reach a place in the forest sacred to the *yogis*. Guru

150. Tara Singh Narotam, *Gur Tirath Sangrah*, 1844, p. 35.

151. Walter Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, Vol. II, 1828, p. 519.

152. *Gur Tirath Sangrah*, See Gurdwara Srinagar, No. 19.

153. Almora is an ancient town. It finds mention even in the *Sikand Puran* just as the names of Kailash, Mansarovar, etc. occur in other *Puranas*. See *Almora District Gazetteer*, p. 207.

154. Haldwani is 88 miles (about 141 kms.) from Almora by motorable road. If one walks by hilly pathways, the distance comes down to 41 miles (64 kms.).

155. Durga Pipal is on the roadside leading to the jungle from Haldwani: this road is motorable. Durga Pipal is 25 miles (30 kms.) off Haldwani and beyond that one has to traverse 8 miles (13 kms.) on foot on the hilly pathways. Sri Guru Singh Sabha of Haldwani makes arrangements every year on the Vaisakhi day to take the devotees to this place. There are many lions and tigers in this forest. Therefore, it is impossible for devotees to visit this place in ones and twos.

Nanak reached this forest coming through the hilly pathway from Almora. The site where the Guru sat is not more than 25-30 miles (about 48 kms) towards east from Almora. It is now called *Ritha Sahib*.

In the beginning of the 16th century, this entire region was replete with hermitages of *yogis*. There were several schools¹⁵⁶ which followed the *yoga sastra* of Patanjali. In the beginning of the 16th century, the *yogis* were predominant in the Punjab and northern India.¹⁵⁷ All of them were disciples of Gorakh Nath.¹⁵⁸ They lived in hermitages erected around Almora. They were further sub-divided into twelve traditions and the *yogis* of different traditions had separate habitations.¹⁵⁹

It is related that Mardana felt very hungry as Guru Nanak approached this place of the *yogis*. He asked Mardana to go to the place of *yogis* and ask for something to eat, but the *yogis* refused. The Guru asked Mardana to eat the fruit of the tree under which they were sitting. Mardana climbed up the tree. It was a soap-berry tree and it bore soap-nuts, but the fruit was sweet rather than being bitter as was its nature. The devotees of Guru Nanak call this tree *Ritha Sahib* (*ritha* = soap-berry; *sahib* = an honorific epithet). The fruit

156. The word *yogi* is rightly used for those who adhere to the philosophy of Patanjali. See H.H. Wilson, *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, 1958, p. 116.

157. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Nath Sampradai*, Varanasi, 1966, p. 10. According to the 1891 census, the number of *yogis* who were disciples of Gorakh Nath was 28,816.

158. Gorakhnath is believed to have lived in the 10th century. After Shankaracharya, he has been the most famous Hindu religious personality. According to Briggs, he might have lived in north-west India, especially the districts of Peshawar and Jhelum because two of their ancient sites, Gorakh Hatthi and Gorakh Tilla, are found there. This has also been said in Abul Fazal's *Akbarnama*. See *Nath Sampradai*, p. 106 and *Religious Sects of Hindus*, p. 119, op. cit.

159. The Gorakh Panthis are sub-divided into the following twelve branches: Saryanathi, Dharamnath, Ram Panth, Natashwari, Kanhar, Kapilani, Bairag, Mannathi, Ai Panth, Pagan Panth, Ganganathi. See *Nath Sampradai*, p. 12, op. cit.

According to a tradition, Siva (Adinath) had two disciples—Matsyendra Nath and Jalandhar Nath. The disciples of the former were the *yogis* who pierced their ears and wore rings whereas those of the latter kept their ears intact. Both of them had a fight. Jalandhar Nath was defeated and the others won. The famous city Jalandhar of Punjab also seems to have been named after Jalandhar Nath. See *Jalandhar District Gazetteer*. The most famous disciple of Matsyendranath has been Gorakhnath. In the beginning of the 16th century, these Gorakh Panthis enjoyed great influence in Punjab and the Terai region of Almora district.

of the tree has since been sweet as always. Devotees take the fruit as an offering to far off places. The custodian Mahant of the *yogi* hermitage looks after this tree. It is said that an improvised canopy has also been built above it.

Setting out from here, Guru Nanak reached a place near the Deuha rivulet, which now bears the name Nanakmatta. During those days, it was known as Gorakhmatta or *Sidh* Matta.¹⁶⁰ Travelling through hilly pathways, this place is about thirty miles (48 kms.) from *Ritha* Sahib. But if one travels via Haldwani, the distance comes to about 70 miles (96 kms.).¹⁶¹ Coming to Gorakhmatta, the Guru sat beneath a *peepul* tree.¹⁶² The original natives of this region, who are called Dharus, call this place Panja Sahib. They have the faith that every leaf of this tree bears the imprint of the Guru's hand (*panja*). On the Diwali day, a huge fair is held there. These people throng to this place in thousands. The echoes of "Victory be to Panja Sahib" resound in the region.¹⁶³ Strange are the ways of God : this *peepul* tree is also not like any other ordinary *peepul* tree. Each leaf of it is rich green, softer than the leaves of ordinary *peepul* trees and has more than one imprints on each one of them. About twenty yards off the *peepal* tree in the Nanakmatta Gurdwara there is another *peepal* tree within the precincts of the shrine. This tree is quite ordinary and has nothing in common with the sanctified tree. Guru Hargobind sent Bhai Almas to this place who worked enthusiastically

160. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhi* gives it the name Nanakmatta. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* names it Gorakhmatta. The *Miharban* version does not mention this place. Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla names it *Sidh* Mata. He states :

"In the state of Kumaon was a place called *Sikh* Mata;
Sidhas would gather here where came the Ocean of Compassion."

161. Haldwani is 42 miles (67 kms.) from *Ritha* Sahib. There is railway line from Haldwani up to Kicchho and from there Nanakmatta is about 25 miles (40 kms.). One can also board a train (meter-gauge) from Pilibhit and get down at Khatima railway station. From Khatima, Nanakmatta is only ten miles (16 kms.) towards west.

162. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that the Guru came and sat beneath a bunyan tree. The *Miharban* version gives no such detail. The *Janamsakhis* of Bhai Bala and Bhai Mani Singh say that he sat beneath a *peepul* tree. This seems correct because that *peepul* tree has survived till date.

163. *Wajab-ul-Arz Pargana Nanakmatta, Tehsil Kilpuri, District Nainital*, (106-07), records in its fourth chapter that 'at the time of collecting revenue, one rupee will be collected from each payee for the Mahant of the Panja Sahib.' The author got a copy of *Wajab-ul-Arz* through the courtesy of Giani Harcharan Singh, Manager, Gurdwara Nanakmatta.

to discover this place.¹⁶⁴ The *yogis* felt jealous of him and they burnt this *peepal* tree. Then on the invitation of Almast, Guru Hargobind arrived at Nanakmatta. He poured into the roots of the tree a bowl-full water mixed with saffron.¹⁶⁵ Soon the tree sprouted into green leaves and since then its branches have a reddish tinge.

Sitting beneath this tree, Guru Nanak asked Mardana to make a bonfire. Mardana first collected some wood and then went to the *yogis* to get some fire from them. The *yogis* refused to lend him any fire. Mardana somehow succeeded in getting fire and he lit the bonfire. There was a strong wind and heavy rain that night. The tradition has it that all the bonfires of the *yogis* got extinguished, except that of Guru Nanak which remained lit throughout.¹⁶⁶

Getting up in the morning, Guru Nanak felt the need of water. He sent Mardana to fetch some water. The *yogis* refused to oblige. The Guru asked Mardana to go northwards. Mardana went 2-3 furlongs and found a rivulet there, and brought water from there. This rivulet is known as Phauri Ganga¹⁶⁷ to commemorate Guru Nanak's visit to the place. This rivulet has since got merged in the Diuha dam. As a result of the pressure mounted by the local Sikhs, the Uttar Pradesh (now Uttaranchal) Government improvised some springs of Phauri Ganga into a well and connected the well with the dam. Stairs go down into the well from both sides so that the devotees can get down into the well and take the sacred water (*charanamrit*).¹⁶⁸ The pool formed at the dam has been named

164. Sujan Rai Bhandari's *Khulas-tut-Tiwarikh*, which is a contemporary work of Emperor Aurangzeb, records; "Nanakmatta is a place where disciples and devotees of Nanak gather in large numbers to pay obeisance and offerings."

165. *Itihasak Gurdwara Sri Nanakmatta*, published by Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Nanakmatta, District Nainital, p. 12.

166. On the eve of Diwali each year the original natives of the Terai region, called Dharus, come from far and near to get some ashes of this bonfire. They offer here as much money as a new-born babe can hold in hand, and take the ashes to their homes. The management of the Gurdwara places here the ash from the *langar* and wrap the ash in small quantity in a paper with *Satinam* (True is His Name) printed on it. On the Diwali of 1967, a total of Rs.5000/- were offered here. In the offerings made are sometimes found gold, silver, and many other precious things.

167. As per a local tradition and belief, Guru Nanak made this rivulet flow down from the mountains by giving *phauri* to Mardana. That is why it is named Phauri Ganga. In the Terai region, Phauri Ganga is an eternal gift given by Guru Nanak.

168. This well was built in A.D. 1962.

Nanak Sagar.¹⁶⁹ The outlet from where the water is let out is two miles (3 kms.) from Gurdwara Nanakmatta.

When the *yogis* realized that their non-cooperation with Guru Nanak has failed either to harass or harm him, they felt impressed by the personality of Guru Nanak. They came to the Guru in a group and asked him as to who was his Guru and from whom had he received initiation ? Perhaps the *siddhas* might also have posed similar questions to him. Therefore, Guru Nanak uttered the following hymn in reply to them :

Which is the scale, which the weight-measures ?
 What gold-tester may I call in to test *Thee* ?
 Which the Master from whom instruction I may receive;
 Whom to approach to evaluate *Thee* ?
 My previous Beloved, unknowable by me is Thy extent.
 On water and land art Thou pervasive,
 In all creation immanent. (I Pause)
 In scales of the mind, with weights of consciousness,
 By devotion to Thee the gold-tester :
 Weighing in my self the Lord—
 Thus my mind may I restrain.
 Himself the pointing needle, Himself measure and scales,
 Himself the weighman,
 Himself viewer and evaluator,
 Himself the good-dealer.
 With mind, blind, low-born, alienated, fluctuating each moment—
 Abides Nanak :
 How may this thoughtless one *enlightenment* attain ?¹⁷⁰

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 731

169. On the huge door of the control room of the dam is written "Nanak Sagar" and below it in the corridor is written the following statement in English and Hindi. The English version is as follows "Dam on the river Deoha is 12 miles (19 kms.) long and has cost of Rs.1.80 crores. It has been named after His Holiness Guru Nanak who worshipped for some time in this area. The water from this Sagar is to feed a network of canals in Rohilkhand Division which was hitherto fed by Sarda canal. Through Sarda Deoha feeder Duni pick-up weir is situated at a distance of 16 miles (26 kms.) from here down stream this reservoir on the river Deoha is picked up at Duni weir. The water in the Sarda canal thus saved by construction of this reservoir is now being utilized in extending irrigation in the central and eastern districts of U.P. Annual Irrigation proposed : 96750 acres : date of start : April 1956, date of completion : June 1962."

170. The *Vilayatuli* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* record that the Guru uttered this hymn. Both the versions make almost similar statements. This seems correct. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* records that the Guru uttered here the hymn which is

The *yogis* were not satisfied with this hymn of the Guru because their experience didn't go beyond outward appearance. Therefore, they impressed upon the Guru to become *yogi* like them and live a life as they do. In response the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Yoga lies not in the patched quilt, nor in *carrying* a staff;
 Yoga lies not either in rubbing ashes over the limbs.
 Yoga lies not in earnings, nor in close-cropping the head,
 Nor in blowing the horn.
 To abide undefiled amid *Maya*-defilement
 Is the *true* way to attain *success* in Yoga-praxis.
 Yoga by mere chatter is not practised.
 To regard all alike with undifferentiating sight
 Entitles one a true *Yogi* to be called. (I Pause)
 Yoga lies not in frequenting wild places, tombs and cremation
 grounds,
 Nor in absorption in *Samadhi*.
 Yoga lies not in wandering over lands and regions, Nor in bathing
 at holy spots.
 To abide undefiled amid *Maya*-defilement
 Is the true way to attain *success* in Yoga-praxis.
 By contact with the holy Preceptor is shattered doubt
 And the wandering *mind* restrained.
 Then oozes the *amrita-spring*, absorption with poise attained.
 And in one's own self is attained enlightenment.
 To abide undefiled amid *Maya*-defilement
 Is the *true* way to attain *success* in Yoga-praxis.
 Saith Nanak : To die while living — practise such Yoga.
 As resounds the horn without blowing,
 Is attained the state of fearlessness.
 To abide undefiled amid *Maya*-defilement
 Is the *true* way to attain *success* in Yoga-praxis.¹⁷¹

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 731

In this hymn the Guru has expressed his own views while using the terminology of the *yogis*. At this the *yogis* understood the Guru's greatness and they bowed before him. The Guru stayed here for some time and then went on to Tanda.

➤ now included in *Guru Granth* on p. 876 under *Ramkali* measure. This text also refers to several miracles which are not found in either the *Vilayatvali* or the *Bala Janamsakhis*. The description given by Mani Singh belongs to a much later period. Therefore, we have agreed to the details given in the *Bala* and *Vilayatvali Janamsakhis*.

171. Both the *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* agree that the Guru uttered this hymn.

Tanda

Leaving Nanakmatta the Guru travelled about sixty miles (ninety-six kms.) towards South and reached Tanda. This town was situated on the road connecting Muradabad and Nainital.¹⁷² Most of the inhabitants of this town belonged to *Banjara* community as they still do. According to the *Imperial Gazetteer*, in the beginning; this town might have been a halting place for these traders. That is perhaps why the town came to be known as Tanda of the *Banjaras*. The natives of this town traded in rice which they brought down from Terai region to the plains for sale. They used to keep several horses and mares. They would load the grain on these animals.¹⁷³ This town is situated in the present day district of Rampur and is about eight miles (13 kms.) from the district headquarters. It is about twelve miles (19 kms.) towards north of Muradabad.

Guru Nanak approached Tanda and sat down outside the town. They say that a son was born that day in a *Banjara* family and there were festivities going on. Other natives of the village had come to that house to offer their felicitations. As Mardana saw these people thus enjoying, the old habit of felicitating with a view to seeking reward raised itself in Mardana's mind. He sought the Guru's permission and reached that house. In the crowd no one cared for Mardana's presence and he came back disappointed.¹⁷⁴ The Guru advised him to cultivate contentment and perseverance.

As fate would have it, the boy whose birth was being celebrated with such enthusiasm and joy died the very next day. Now the joy and celebrations disappeared and sorrow and grief overtook the family. All those who came out of this house came out weeping and crying. Guru Nanak was highly moved by this event. He uttered the following hymn :

In the first quarter of night, my Merchant-Friend, by Divine will into
the womb wast thou cast;
Suspended by the head, didst thou undergo penance therein—

172. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, p. 221.

173. *Ibid.*

174. This episode is not mentioned in the *Miharban*, Bala and Mani Singh *Janamsakhis*. However, Guru Nanak's coming to this place from Nanakmatta was natural from the geographical point of view because it was the only route to go farther. The utterance of the hymn as addressed to the *Banjaras* also confirms this.

Supplicating the Master for release :
 Suspended downward didst thou supplicate and absorb thy thought
 in the Master.
 Camest thou in shame into the world; unclad shalt thou return.
 Man gets what is recorded by God's pen on his forehead.
 Saith Nanak : In the first quarter in the womb was man cast.
 In the second quarter of night, Merchant-Friend, hast thou put God
 out of mind.
 By diverse hands wast thou fondled with love as Krishna in the home
 of Yashodha :
 By diverse hands fondled, thou bubble of breath, thy mother showered
 love on thee.
 Think, think thou involved in forgetfulness, nothing shall last with
 thee;
 He who created thee, Him hast thou forgotten—contemplate Him
 with thy mind !
 Saith Nanak : In the second quarter hast thou put God out of mind !
 In the third quarter of night, Merchant-Friend,
 Is their heart fixed on wealth and desire for pleasures of youth.
 Thou thinkest not on the Name Divine, liberator from bondage,
 Forgetful of God, thou creature ! in Maya's maze baffled.
 Lured by wealth and drunk in desire, hast thou cast away thy life.
 Thy merchandise has not been Righteousness; nor hast thou made
 good deeds thy friends.
 Saith Nanak : In the third quarter is man absorbed in wealth and
 desire.
 In the fourth quarter of night, the Reaper comes to the field.
 Led by Yama, Merchant-Friend, none thy destination knows.
 In the grip of Yama none would know thy destination or God's will.
 Victims of illusion would cry round the bier — in a moment wouldst
 thou a stranger *to them* become.
 Thy attainment would be as they desire in life.
 Saith Nanak : Listen thou Man ! in the fourth quarter the Reaper
 comes to reap the field. —Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 75-76

In the first watch of night, O' my merchant friend ! by Lord's
 order, thou was cast into the womb. With body reversed thou
 performed penance within and prayed to thy master. Upside down
 thou said prayers unto the Lord with fixed attention and affection.
 Thou came against manner (naked) in the dark age (world) and again
 shall depart naked. Such cargo shall be thy mortal, as God's pen has
 recorded on his brow. Says Nanak, in the first watch, soul descends
 into the womb by Lord's will. In the second watch of the night, O'

merchant friend ! man forgets Lord's meditation. From hand to hand it is dandled about like Krishna in the house of Yashodha, O' merchant friend ! In arms then mortal is tossed about and the mother says, "this is my son." O' my thoughtless and stupid soul ? Think of God. At the last moment nothing shall be thine. Thou knowest not Him, who created the creation. Now gather thou wisdom within thy heart.

Ayodhya

Setting out from Tanda, Guru Nanak travelled South-East. Those days there was a dense forest in the region where we now find Rampur, Pilibhit and Bareilly districts. Habitation was rather sparse.¹⁷⁵ In these forests and the adjoining hilly areas, the Rajput chiefs had waged war against the Delhi kings for several centuries.¹⁷⁶ The Delhi kings cleared these forests to make way for the movement of the army.¹⁷⁷ The contemporary Sultan of Delhi, Sikandar Lodhi liked the hills of Pilibhit and he frequented this area for his hunting expeditions.¹⁷⁸ From Tanda, Guru Nanak moved to Gola, an ancient town of district Kheri. This town is situated 22 miles (35 kms.) north-west of Lakhimpur which was once the major centre of pilgrimage in this region. There were temples of Shiva here. It is estimated that in olden times it was on the bank of the Ganges river.¹⁷⁹ However, during the days of Guru Nanak, Sarda river flowed a little distance away from the town. In the Kheri district this river was given the name of Chauka, and from a little distance off Gola

175. Rampur, Moradabad and Bareilly were not populated during Guru Nanak's times. In those days the capital of the region was Sambal, now a tehsil town in Moradabad district and 23 miles (40 kms.) south-west of Moradabad.

176. According to *Moradabad District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1711, pp.143-47, this region of Avadh was then called Kathir. The Hindu chiefs of these places hid themselves in forests and hills as the Muslim armies approached. Therefore, the Muslim invaders who established themselves in Delhi launched expeditions towards this side in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

177. Gyas-ud-Din was the first king to construct roads in this area. See *Moradabad District Gazetteer*, p. 143.

178. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

179. Gola is a very ancient town. Earlier it was a town sacred to the Buddhists. The *lingam* in the Mahadeva temple is related to the Ramayana story. It is said that the Muslim kings made endeavours to uproot this *lingam*, but failed. See *Kheri District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1905, pp. 184-86.

transportation by boats started in this river.¹⁸⁰ Leaving Gola town, the Guru reached the river bank and took a boat. This Chauka river merges into the Ghagra near the Brahma straits. The Ghagra river¹⁸¹ was a special means¹⁸² of travel for those desirous of visiting Ayodhya. Therefore the Guru travelled by boat and landed at Ayodhya¹⁸³; he was accompanied by Mardana. The site where Guru Nanak sat on reaching Ayodhya is now marked by an old *gurdwara*.¹⁸⁴ Ayodhya was an important centre of Hindu pilgrimage. It is said to be the birth place of legendary Lord Rama. The *Samadhi* of Dashratha is also situated in this town. The well known Chinese travellers Hieun Tsang had also visited this town.

Holy men from different religious traditions came here to Guru Nanak and put him many questions. They asked that many give huge alms on the occasion of *yajna*, many perform austere meditation, many go naked, many hang themselves upside down, many perform worship and rituals, many undergo physical penances and thus kill themselves. The question was put to the Guru, "Will they or will they not get liberated?" Listening to them, the Guru kept quiet for a while and then recited the following hymn¹⁸⁵:

180. The river Chauka or Sarda has several names. The Kali and Saraj rivulets fall in it. It comes down from hills near Nanakmatta and then flows south-east in between Pilibhit and Nepal under the name of Sarda. Near Motighat in Pilibhit district, the Sarda river merges with Ghagra, thus giving it the name Chauka.

181. The river Chauka changes its course quite often. For the past few centuries it has tended more towards the east. See *Kheri District Gazetteer*, p. 61. Thus, this river might have flowed closer to Gola during Guru Nanak's days. The famous ferry of Chauka river these days is Maroch from where transportation by boats begins and which is about 20 miles (32 kms.) north-west of Gola. *The Kheri District Gazetteer* (p. 6) states that generally the large boats plied in the river up to the Manocha.

182. "In olden times the Ghagra river was the major means of transportation of the district. Even these days there is a lot of transportation. Most of the travellers from Ayodhya take this mode of travel. See *Faizabad District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1905, p. 3.

183. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak along with Mardana went to the river which implies that they might have travelled to Ayodhya by boat. Besides, travelling to Ayodhya from Nanakmatta also seems geographically correct. This is what the *Mani Singh* text says. However, *Miharban Janamsakhi* records that the Guru came to Ayodhya from the South which does not seem correct. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* make no mention of the Guru's visit to Ayodhya.

184. See Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 59.

185. *Miharban Janamsakhi* records this episode and confirms recitation of this hymn. Bhai Mani Singh's version says that Guru Nanak told them that Lord Rama

Man may perform sacrifices, make fire-offerings, dispense charities,
 perform austerities and offer worship,
 And on his body inflict torture of penance —
 Still without *devotion to* the Name Divine liberation he would not
 attain;
 The God-directed liberation from devotion to the holy Name obtain.
 Without devotion to the Name Divine is birth in the world gone
 waste.
 Such consume poison, poisonous their utterance :
 Without *devotion to* the Name, without gain they die, and after death
 in transmigration wander (I-Pause)
 One may study scriptures, expound grammar, and thrice daily
 perform worship —
 Man ! without *devotion to* the Master's Word comes not liberation;
 Without *devotion to* the Name Divine man *Maya*-entangled, dies.
 Many may carry a staff *Yogi-like*, a begging-bowl;
 Grow the tuft, wear the sacred thread and *dhoti*; visit bathing-spots
 and wander excessively in *pilgrimage*—
 Without *devotion to* the Name comes not peace :
 One contemplating the Name Divine alone finds liberation.
 Let one wear matted hair on the head, smear the body with ashes,
 Discard vesture and go about naked :
 Without *devotion to* the Name Divine comes not liberation.
 Those bound by their deeds, such guises assume.
 All creatures on water and land in all places, by Thee are cherished.
 By the Master's grace save Thy servant;
 Whereby Nanak freely of the Divine elixir has quaffed.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1128

The Guru halted at Ayodhya for some time and then continued his journey.

Prayag

From Ayodhya Guru Nanak boarded a boat in the Ghagra river¹⁸⁶ and reached what is now known as Tanda (Faizabad district). During those days the place was not populated. Although the town Tanda took its present shape in the beginning of the 18th century, in the

➤ had taken the entire town along, then where has this town sprung from ? Perhaps, he had kept the verse "*Ram Katha jug jug atal.....*" from the *Dasam Granth* in mind. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala* versions do not mention this episode.

186. Ghagra river was the main mode of transport to and from Ayodhya. See *Faizabad District Gazetteer*, 1905, p. 3.

days of Guru Nanak the place was a famous ferry. The *banjaras* or the wandering tradesmen would stay here during their journey to and fro.¹⁸⁷ From here Guru Nanak walked on foot twelve miles (19 kms.) towards the west and reached the Singholi region.¹⁸⁸ Towards the west of this area two streams—Marha and Saboi—merge together, and thereafter it gets the name Tanas in which the boat plied upto Jalalpur throughout the year. The place in Singholi region where Akbarpur (Faizabad district) was founded during the reign of Emperor Akbar was a ferry of Tanas river. People would board boats from here for going towards Azamgarh. Guru Nanak also took a boat from here for Nizamabad (District Azamgarh). A *gurdwara* stands on the site on the bank of the Tanas since long past commemorating the memory of Guru Nanak's visit to the place.

On the bank of the Tanas, Nizamabad¹⁸⁹ has been a centre of Sikhism. A furlong off the river inside the township is said to be the site where Guru Nanak then halted. A *gurdwara* has been constructed on this site.¹⁹⁰ It is said that Baba Prem Das Udasi discovered this site and several generations of the Bhallas (descendants of Guru Amar

187. The *Faizabad District Gazetteer*, p. 279, records that wherever towns with the name of Tanda were established they were all halting places of *Banjaras* earlier. There are among Guru Nanak's compositions several hymns addressed to people of this community. See *Guru Granth Sahib*, 'Vanj Karo Vanjareo Vakhar leho sambhal.....' p. 22.

188. During the reign of Emperor Akbar, Singholi Tapa came to be called Akbarpur, and has been known as such since then.

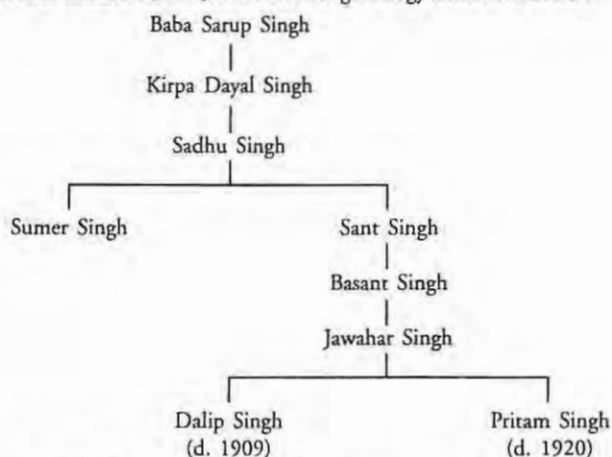
189. Nizam-ud-Din was a military general with the king of Jaunpur. He conquered this town before the times of Guru Nanak. See *Jaunpur District Gazetteer*, 1908, pp. 163-64.

190. There were three *gurdwaras* here—Gurdwara Barhi Sangat, Gurdwara Chhoti Sangat and Akal Bunga. The last-named has since fallen down. Gurdwara Chhoti Sangat is on the bank of the Tanas, but *Guru Granth Sahib* was not installed there when the author visited the place in 1967-68. Only fire-woods, etc. were stored there. Opposite the *gurdwara* on the other side of the river are seen *samadhis* of Baba Sadhu Singh and his cook Baba Gharib Singh. Baba Sumer Singh of Patna was also born in this village. In the other *gurdwara*; inside the town are preserved several old manuscripts. Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* was one among them when the author went there. There are manuscripts of old recensions of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, as well as of *gutkas*. All the Sikhs in the town are Kayasth by caste. Since the town is situated five miles (8 kms.) off the newly constructed road (a *kutch* road leads thereto from Rani Ki Sarai), no Punjabi Sikh has settled there. The land attached to the *gurdwara* has been forfeited under the Land Act and its building has since come down.

Das) have lived here thereafter.¹⁹¹ No tradition of Guru Nanak linked with this town has survived. All the Sikhs of the place are unanimous that Guru Nanak had visited this place. Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, in his *Gur Tirath Sangrah*, accepts that Guru Nanak visited this place. Nizamabad falls on the way from Ayodhya to Prayag.

Prayag where the three rivers meet together is about ninety miles (144 kms) from Nizamabad (now District Azamgarh). Guru Nanak left Nizamabad for Prayag (now Allahabad). He passed through what is now Phulpur tehsil and halted at Jhusi town which is on the left side of the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna. Old Jhusi was a van ancient town and high-rising sand dunes are still found there. This place is linked with Pratisthan or Kosi mentioned in the Puranas. A well from the times of Samundra Gupt still survives in the village. The *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions this place as Hadiabad.¹⁹² This place is situated on the north of Ganges opposite the *sangam* (confluence) just as Prayag is on the south. The Yamuna river also flows down from the south to merge with the Ganges. Emperor Akbar had got a fort erected in-between both the rivers. While coming from Nizamabad, Guru Nanak halted at Jhusi away from the crowds of Prayag town.¹⁹³

191. It seems that first of all Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla, the author of the *Mahima Prakash* and a descendant of Guru Amar Das, came here. His genealogy is said to be as under :



None of them or their descendants is now alive.

192. *Allahabad District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1911, pp. 245-46.

193. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* records that when Guru Nanak went to the place where the Ganga and the Jamuna meet, he stayed on the bank of the Yamuna ☞

During the times of Guru Nanak, the Ganga flowed just past Jhusi. According to Mahant Baba Pancha Nand¹⁹⁴ of the Udasi centre, a raised platform existed at the site sanctified by Guru Nanak which has since been washed away by the river. This platform is said to have been between the present Udasi monastery (Kot Daya Ram) and the high-rising buildings of the Nirmalas.¹⁹⁵

The pilgrims used to come over to Jhusi after bathing at the *triveni*. One day the Guru sat absorbed in his thoughts on the bank of the Ganges. Many pilgrims felt impressed by the glow on his forehead and sat near him. When the Guru looked at them, they asked the Guru for spiritual guidance. They explained that they performed worship, but that was of no avail and that they failed to achieve the celestial bliss. The Guru told them that vices like *kam* (lust), *krোধ* (wrath), *lobh* (greed), *moh* (attachment), and *ahankar* (egoity) did not let them enjoy this bliss.¹⁹⁶ The Guru recited the following hymn :

Greed is a cur, falsehood a scavenger; deceitful earning, eating of
carrion.
Slander of others is as stuffing the mouth with filth;
Wrath an unclean fire.
Craving for earthly tastes, self-praise—

➤ which is not correct. Guru Nanak halted at Jhusi and this averment is correct because of the following reasons :

- a) Coming from Nizamabad, Jhusi comes ahead of Prayag.
 - b) From Jhusi an old road led to Benaras which was got repaired by Sher Shah Suri. It was also for its safety that Emperor Akbar got the Prayag fort built.
 - c) The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records : "Guru Nanak appeared where the Ganga, the Jamuna and the Saraswati merge together." This place is just opposite the town of Jhusi.
 - d) According to a local tradition, Guru Nanak stayed at Jhusi.
194. Baba Pancha Nand is said to have been a disciple, fourteenth in succession, of Bhagat Bhagwan who was a known Sikh of Guru Har Rai. Their succession order runs thus :
- Baba Bhagat Bhagwan, Baba Bankam Das, Baba Tula Ram, Baba Lal Man, Baba Sarup Das, Baba Lahori Das, Baba Ram Dayal, Baba Udami Ram, Baba Bhagat Ram, Baba Sur Das, Baba Bala Nand, Baba Maya Ram, Baba Daya Ram, Baba Puna Nand, Baba Pancha Nand.

195. Statement made by Baba Pancha Nand, Kot Daya Ram, Jhusi, to the author during his visit there in 1967-68.

196. This episode is based on a narrative given in the Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala* versions make no reference of Guru Nanak having visited Prayag. But the circumstantial evidence weighs heavily in favour of the visit.

Such, Lord-Creator, are my actions.
 Friend ! utter only what may bring you honour.
 Such alone are noble as at God's Portal are so designated.
 Those with foul deeds shall wail. (Pause I)
 Man is engrossed in the taste of gold, silver, woman, fragrant
 substances,
 Horses, soft beds, mansions, sweet-tasting meals, flesh food :
 With all these tastes engrossing the body, how may the Name find
 a lodging therein ?
 Such utterance alone is approved as brings honour at God's Court.
 Listen my thoughtless, ignorant self ! utterance of ill-tasting words
 brings ruin.
 Nothing beyond this may be said : Those pleasing God alone are
 good.
 Such alone have wisdom, honour and true wealth,
 As in heart have Him lodged.
 Beyond expression is their praise : none else of praise is worthy.
 Saith Nanak : Those deprived of God's grace
 Are enamoured neither of charity nor devotion to the Name.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 15

The pilgrims felt deeply influenced by the hymn.¹⁹⁷

Again on another day Guru Nanak sat wrapped in thoughts. Some pilgrims came to him and respectfully asked him that people suffer numerous kinds of tortures physically. They meditate standing in the water, torture the body by putting chain around their necks visit pilgrim centres and go about naked, but neither ego is eradicated nor other evils afflicting the body are got rid of. The Guru advised them that the evils of mind could be eradicated by making the mind the dwelling-place of Divine Name. Then he recited the following hymn : Slok Ist Guru.

Spiritual perfection comes neither from self-torture nor from
 indulging in pleasure,
 Or wandering in water like creatures of water.
 Spiritual perfection comes neither from close-cropping the hair,
 Nor from learning or wandering from land to land.
 Nor does spiritual perfection lie in worshipping trees, plants and
 stones,
 Nor in lacerating oneself and bearing torments;
 Neither in keeping elephants on chains nor in owning herds of grazing
 cows lies spiritual perfection.

197. This hymn is found in Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*.

Perfection is granted by Him in whose power it lies;
 On whosoever this He confers, to him He grants union.
 Saith Nanak : Exaltation to him comes, in whose self is remembrance
 of the holy Word
Saith the Lord : All vessels are mine; in all I lie;
 Those from Me alienated, who may show them the way ?
 Those whom I show the way, who has power to lead them astray ?
 Those sent astray from Primal Time, who may show them the way ?¹⁹⁸
 —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 952

All the pilgrims bowed to the Guru after listening to the hymn and comprehending the essence of it from the last verse. The Guru stayed here for some time and then proceeded eastwards.

Benaras

There was a *kutchra* road leading from old Jhusi parallel to the Ganges towards north on the other side of the river.¹⁹⁹ It has not been possible to ascertain how and when this road was laid. However, it is certain that this road existed before the arrival of the Muslims.²⁰⁰ Guru Nanak went 89 miles (142 kms.) south-east on this road and reached Benaras.²⁰¹

The site where Guru Nanak halted at Benaras is one mile off the Benaras railway station. It is called the Guru-ka-Bagh. The area is known as Kamachchha. According to a local tradition, Ganga Ram, a Brahmin, was the first to call on the Guru. He was much impressed by the Guru and became his disciple.²⁰²

One day Guru Nanak sat on the bank of the Ganges. There he saw many *Pandits* absorbed in reading books. Several disciples also

198. This episode and hymn is mentioned only in the *Miharban* text. It is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*. That such a religious discourse took place in Prayag is a distinct possibility.

199. *Allahabad District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 74.

200. *Benaras District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1909, p. 71.

201. Guru Nanak's visit to Benaras is found recorded in the *Vilayatvali*, the *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions of the *Janamsakhis*. It does not find mention in the *Bala* text. However the fact of Guru Nanak having visited Benaras is correct.

202. According to *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* (in the context of Guru Arjan), Hari Lal and Hari Krishan of Kashi came to see the Guru and stayed for some time. It is also said that the Guru uttered *slokas* of Sanskrit for them. Bhai Kahn Singh, in his *Mahan Kosh*, says that they preached Sikh tenets in and around Kashi. According to a local tradition, they were grandsons of Ganga Ram who had called on Guru Nanak at Benaras first of all and become his disciple.

sat by them taking lessons. Many more were meditating. Some others sat there with their faces and bodies besmeared with ashes from the cremation ground. On seeing Guru Nanak there, some people came to him and asked him what was he doing there? All were absorbed either in worship or studying or teaching. In reply to the question put to him, Guru Nanak recited the following hymn :

I fall not into *doubt* of duality; other than the Lord worship not,
 Resorting not to tombs and cremation yards.
 Absorbed in desire I go not to alien abodes —
 My desire by the Name fulfilled.
 The master in my own self *a sight of the Divine Abode* has
 shown—
 In poise brother ! is my mind absorbed.
 All-knowing, all-seeing art Thou—
 Beings *receive* the understanding by Thee granted.
 The mind dyed in dispassion an anchorite has turned;
 By the holy Word, mother mine ! is my mind penetrated.
 Within me is the irrefragible light of the holy Word—
 To the holy Lord is my devotion attached. (Pause)
 Innumerable anchorites claim the world to renounce—
 The true anchorite is one that to the Master is pleasing.
 In this heart hearing the Word, in fear of God absorbed,
 The Lord's tasks he performs; contemplating solely *the Lord*, his mind
 unshaken,
 Whose restlessness he controls;
 Intoxicated with poise, ever in joy in God dyed,
 Praise of the holy Eternal he chants. —*Guru Granth Sahib, p. 635*

The listeners were much impressed and they bowed at Guru Nanak's feet.²⁰³ Benaras has been known as centre of religious scholarship where discourses and dialogues were common. When Guru Nanak arrived there, a Brahmin named Charar Das²⁰⁴ lived there. One day he came to the Guru, sat by him and said : "O devotee ! You wear not *saligram*. Neither you have rosary of osmium sanctum (*tulsi*) nor have you put the frontal mark of *sandal*. What kind of devotee art thou?" In reply Guru Nanak uttered the following hymn :

203. This episode is recorded only in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. However the kind of religious formalism this tradition seeks to describe has ever prevailed in Benaras. Therefore, the episode seems to have taken place at Benaras.

204. This name is mentioned in *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*.

Brahmin ! the *saligram* stone do you worship as Lord
 And wearing rosary of myrobalan beads as good actions :
 Equip thou ship of repetition of the Name Divine,
 And pray to the gracious Lord for grace.
 Why water alkaline soil, and waste your life ?
 This mud-wall shall crumble—why apply mortar to it ? (I - Pause)
 Make your *serving* hands the Persian wheel, its string and pots—
 To that yoke *bullocks* of your mind.
 Irrigate *amrita*-field; fill the patches then shall you be owned by the
Divine Gardener.
 Make lust and wrath you spades—with these dig the earth.
 As you thus dig, shall joy come to you—noway are accumulated
 actions effaced.
 Lord ! Shouldst Thou show grace, heron into a swan turns.
 Nanak, servant of Thy servants humbly supplicates : Gracious Lord !
 show grace.²⁰⁵ —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1171

After listening the Guru, Chatar Das paid his obeisance.²⁰⁶

One day as the Guru sat there, some people asked him what spiritual gain the people of Benaras will achieve since the town has been a major centre for the study of Hindu scriptures, its inhabitants study the scriptures and acquire knowledge. How much spiritual upliftment will they get ? Guru Nanak responded by uttering the following hymn :

Man may read cartloads of books : of books packs he may study;
 Boatfuls of books, books filling cellars he may read;
 All the years of life, months to study of books he may devote;
 His whole life with each breath he may study—
 Despite all this, saith Nanak, with God only one deed, *contemplation*
of the Name, shall be approved.
 All the rest is effort wasted in egoism.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 468

The listeners got their doubts resolved and bowed before the Guru.²⁰⁷

205. This episode is based on the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. It finds mention in no other text. But it remains relevant as much stress was laid on outward religious observances in the times of Nanak and this is what the above hymn conveys.

206. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak recited "Onkar" (in Ramkali Dakhani) to Chatar Das, but this is not confirmed by any other source. Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, says that Guru Nanak recited this hymn at Ankleshwar on the bank of Narbada. But this is not corroborated by any other source.

207. This episode is found in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, and both of these *salokas* are said to have been uttered at Benaras. The religious people of Benaras still take

The orthodox among the Hindus of the 16th century had invented one or the other ritual for each religious observance. They called it *maryada*. In matters of cooking and eating rituals that laid stress on purity and untouchability came to be strictly observed. The rituals connected with purity laid stress on bathing, keeping away from *sutak* (where a child is born recently), etc. A Brahmin of Benaras one day requested Guru Nanak to have meals with him at his place. He made Guru Nanak sit by him and cooked meals for him with extra care to maintain purity. He offered this food to the Guru. However, the Guru said that food was not pure because he did not keep the feeling of purity in mind while preparing food. When the Brahmin asked the Guru what he meant by purity, he uttered the following hymn :

As occur the woman's periods again and again, *making her unclean*,
 So in the mouth of the liar abides falsehood
 That brings him ignominy ever.
 Call not pure such as wash their bodies clean.
 Saith Nanak : Those alone are pure in whose mind is lodged the Lord.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 472

The Guru saw that the Brahmin has made the hearth by digging the earth. The firewood was washed before use. The Guru said :

Should *sutak* impurity be believed in, *then know*,
 Such impurity occurs everywhere.
 Inside cowdung and wood are found worms.
 No single grain of cereals is without life in it.
 The first of living things is water, whereby is each object sustained.
 How may *sutak* impurity be believed when even in the kitchen it is
 occurring ?

Saith Nanak : The *sutak* impurity goes not thus—
 Enlightenment alone washes it off. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 473

Listening this, the Brahmin paid obeisance to Guru Nanak.²⁰⁸
 One day as the Guru sat in Benaras, some Brahmins questioned

► pride in their knowledge of Vedas and Shastras. Guru Nanak condemns the ego that slips in as one acquires the knowledge of the Vedas. The last verses condemn rituals which can be seen in abundance in Benaras even today.

208. According to Miharban's *Janamsakhi*, this episode took place at Benaras. The idea of maintaining so-called purity and keeping away from *sutak* was most prevalent where Brahminism was at its peak. Benaras was certainly a major centre of Brahminism where a discourse on *Sutak* could be held.

him that the Vedas lay stress on knowledge whereas he laid emphasis on deeds. They wanted to know the difference between the two. In response Guru Nanak uttered the following hymns :

Declare the Scriptures : Good and evil are seeds of heaven and hell.
 Whatever the self sows that sprouts, and that it consumes.
 Enlightenment the Scriptures laud as supreme;
 By it is *attained* the holy Name.
 By sowing truth; truth grows, and *the self* at the Divine Portal finds
 a place.
 Scriptures are the merchants, enlightenment their capital—
 This by grace is attained.
 Saith Nanak : Without such capital none *with profit* has departed.
 —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1243

The Brahmins understood that deeds were in fact necessary to acquire knowledge. So they bowed before the Guru.²⁰⁹

Guru Nanak halted in Benaras for a few days and then proceeded further.

Raja Hari Nath

From Benaras there are two routes that lead to Hajipur (Patna). One of them was a *kutchra* passage that went parallel to the Ganges. Another led to Patna via Gaya, the road that led to Patna via Sasaram and Gaya was later on named Sher Shah Suri Road because Emperor Sher Shah Suri also got constructed inns along side this road. Walking down this route, there lies an ancient town Chandraul, 29 miles off (46.40 kms.) Benaras.²¹⁰ Within a radius of five miles (8 kms.) of this town there are several habitations well as ancient ruins. It seems Hari Nath was a chief of one of these places where Guru Nanak went there.²¹¹

209. As per Miharban's *Janamsakhi*, this event took place at Benaras. Discussion on *karma* and *gian* had been going on even before Guru Nanak. Benaras was an important centre of religious education. Therefore such a discussion could be possible when Guru Nanak visited the place. Guru Nanak calls *karma* and *gian* complementary to each other.

210. Chandraul is the main town of Benaras tehsil. In the 12th century, a Raghubansi Rajput by the name of Kanwardev came over from Ayodhya to settle down here. Dhiman Dev in the 15th Century was from his ninth generation. The descendants of Kanwardev and Dhiman Dev ruled over this region for several centuries. See *Benaras District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1909, pp. 343-44.

211. Miharban's *Janamsakhi* records on p.150 (App. 105) : "Then Guru Nanak set ➡

Setting out from Benaras and on his way to Gaya, Guru Nanak halted near Chandrauli. He took up his residence outside the town. The Guru remained absorbed in himself and did not talk to anybody. He remained silent for some time and this had a salutary effect on the people. The news spread throughout the town that a faqir had come who neither spoke nor made any gestures. The very sight of his handsome and impressive face was blissful. Listening this, the Chief of the town, Hari Nath, came to have a glimpse of the Guru. He came and sat beside the Guru. At this time, the Guru recited the following hymn :

Each moment is the self in *agony* of burning involved—
In agony burning, and *fallen into* evils, ruined.
 One that of the holy Word is forgetful,
 Like a leper wails.
 Much talking is just babbling :
 The Lord without our utterance knows all. (I Pause)
Contemplate Him who granted *to us* eye and nose,
 And gave the tongue with skill of utterance;
 He that even in fire of the womb protected *our* self;
By whose command the wind conveys sound.
 All attachment, *worldly* love and pleasure
 Brings on blots of black ignominy.
 Man departs with face soiled with blackness of sin,
 And at the portal finds no place of rest.
 By grace is attained *blessing of* utterance of Thy name.
 By attachment to this alone comes liberation—no other shelter is
 there.
 One that is sinking, *by the Name* is succoured.
 Saith Nanak : The holy Eternal universal bounty dispenses.
 —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 662

This hymn acted as a balm on the aching psyche of Hari Nath. It seemed to him as if the Guru had spelt out the condition of his

➤ out slowly from Benaras and making brief halts reached the town of Hari Nath. He stayed in this eastern town." Chandrauli is eastwards of Benaras and beside Chandrauli there is another village called Harinathpura which, it is said, was founded by Raja Hari Nath. During Guru Nanak's times, Chandrauli was the only major Rajput concentration in the Benaras region and, according to the *Benaras District Gazetteer*, descendants of Dhiman ruled there. Hari Nath seems to have been one of them.

A geographical study of the area reveals that Chandrauli is situated on the Benaras-Gaya road. The Guru might have met the chief of this place on his way from Benaras to Gaya.

(Hari Nath's) mind when he said : "My soul burns over and over again...." As for the question of love, attachment and enjoyment, it seemed to him as if God Himself took the form of this faqir to eradicate his suffering. So he fell at the Guru's feet and prayed that the Guru make him his disciple and let him be his companion. He even promised to renounce the throne. The Guru advised him that there was *yoga* even in reigning. He further told him to serve the people and remember the Name Divine. Thus giving Hari Nath the message of *nam* (Divine Name), *dan* (charity) and *gharibi* (humility). Thereafter, Guru Nanak resumed his journey.²¹²

Gaya

Guru Nanak reached Gaya after passing through Chandrauli and Sasaram. It was a Hindu pilgrim centre situated on the bank of the Phalgu.²¹³

It was strongly believed during those days that Gaya was a devil (*shaitan*) who took to hard meditation. Vishnu was pleased at this and told him to ask for a boon. The devil sought the boon that whosoever saw him might get free from the pangs of hell. Lord Vishnu said 'whosoever sees my feet will get liberated.' The Vishnu Pad is a huge temple where pilgrims from all over India come to pay obeisance. Another belief that was current was that if one performed here the last rites of his ancestors who were already dead they would also get liberated. Therefore, many Hindus visited Gaya to perform last rites of their ancestors to seek liberation for them.²¹⁴ While

212. The story of Raja Hari Nath is found only in the *Miharban* text. No other tradition makes a mention of it. This is in accordance with the life and mission of Guru Nanak which exhorts man to live a life of detachment in this material world.

213. Gaya was earlier one of the pilgrim centres of Buddhists. According to the *Gaya District Gazetteer*, two special Hindu rituals—worship of Vishnu's feet and of peepal tree—seem to have evolved from Buddhism. Worship of feet is a special Buddhist ritual : the feet are taken as the feet of Lord Buddha himself. Cunningham says that after the downfall of Buddhism, the Hindus converted the idea of Buddha's feet to that of Vishnu's feet. Similarly, the pilgrims circumambulate the *peepal* tree to offer food to their dead ancestors. This *peepal* tree had religious significance for Buddhists. Heun Tsang also makes a mention of this fact. In the same way, with the passage of time the *peepal* tree also acquired a place of importance in the Hindu religious rituals. See *Gaya District Gazetteer*, pp. 69-70.

214. A Sixteenth Century Chauhan feudal lord of Patna commissioned a Brahmin to write an account of the condition of Hindus in Gaya. See *Gaya District Gazetteer*, pp. 69-70.

performing these rites, they make round balls of rice and lighted lamps. They believed that by their doing so, their ancestors could get salvation.

As Guru Nanak sat on the bank of the Phalgu river absorbed in his thoughts, the *pandas* came to him and advised him to get the last rituals performed for his own and his ancestors' liberation.²¹⁵ The Guru replied that he had lit a lamp for himself and his ancestors. He had performed such a ritual that the darkness of ignorance would wane. Heaven and hell are phenomenon of ignorance. Those who have lit the lamp of knowledge of Divine Name they stood liberated. The Guru uttered the following hymn for the *pandas* :

The Sole Name Divine is my lamp; therein is poured oil of suffering;
As by the light of *realization* is this oil burnt,
Lifted is encounter with yama.
Let not the world ridicule this as idle boast :
Lakhs of maunds of firewood by one particle of fire *are burnt*.
(Pause I)

Devotion to the holy Name Divine is my ritual sweets and feasting.
And offering to God :
In this life and the hereafter, now and in future,
This alone is my prop.
Your laudation to me is holy Ganga and Benaras
Therein my divine self takes dips :
True bathing in engaging in devotion day and night lies.
Some are the offerings to the gods; others to departed ancestors.
These the Brahmins mould and consume.
Saith Nanak : The offering of Divine grace inexhaustible remains.²¹⁶

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 358

The Brahmins felt impressed on listening to these words and bowed before the Guru. There is a *gurdwara* in Gaya to commemorate the Guru's visit to that place. It is situated by the side of Vishnu Pad temple. Baba Ram Das Udasi is the *Mahant* who manages the

215. The Brahmins prepared round balls of rice and flour to use them for *Pind-Patal* ritual and they got money in return for performing the rituals. Therefore, they advised every visitor to get these rituals performed. To light a lamp is also a ritual that was considered necessary prior to one's death. The person about to die was made to lie, on ground and a lamp was lit near him. This was called 'lighting the lamp.' Many people themselves got this ritual performed by visiting Gaya.

216. This episode is not recorded in Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*. In the above hymn of Guru Nanak we find details of rituals performed for the dead at Gaya. This in itself is an evidence of the Guru's visit to Gaya.

gurdwara which is known as Gurdwara Deo Ghat. The building of the shrine was got constructed by Almast during the pontificate of Guru Hargobind. The stamp of Bhai Almast is still preserved there.²¹⁷

Hajipur (Patna)

A *kacha* road from Gaya led to the place which has since come to be known as Patna Sahib.²¹⁸ Those days debris of the old city of

217. The stamp of Baba Almast that lies here has the following words inscribed on it : "Sri Wondrous Lord Creator-Lord, Nanak-Almast, Reign and throne of the True Guru, Nanak." This Almast was the same person who served in the *gurdwara* at Nanakmatta. It was also at his request that Guru Hargobind had gone there. A *hukamnama* of Guru Tegh Bahadur is also preserved in this *gurdwara*. Of course, this *gurdwara* is a modest structure. The *samadhis* of the following Udasi saints are located within its precincts : Baba Bishan Das, Baba Prabhu Das, Baba Basant Das and Baba Sobha Das. The last-named saint died around A.D. 1898. Baba Ram Das, a disciple of Baba Sobha Das, was the *Mahant* of this *gurdwara* in 1965-66.
218. During the time of Guru Nanak, Patna had not yet been inhabited. According to the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, the modern city of Patna was founded by Sher Shah Suri in 1541 (See *Patna District Gazetteer*). That is why the *Vilayatnāli* and the *Bala Janamsakhis* make no mention of Patna. Only Mani Singh's version mentions Patna. However, by the 18th Century, Patna had become a famous city. In the *Miharban* version, it is called Hajipur-Patna which seems correct. Gurdwara Gai Ghat at Patna commemorates the Guru's visit there. It is just possible that the Guru might have crossed the river from this *ghat* to reach Hajipur. The area of Gai Ghat was earlier known as Sundar Ban. During the reign of Aurangzeb, it was renamed Azimabad and the Sundar Ban area came to be called Gulzar Bagh. These days the Gai Ghat area is known as Gulzar Bagh.

The *Janamsakhis* of Bhai Bala and Bhai Mani Singh say that a jeweller by the name of Salis Rai met Guru Nanak at Bishambarpura. Some opine that Bishambarpura which is now a small colony in the city of Patna might have been a village those days and Salis Rai might be a resident of that village. However, this does not seem correct for the following reasons :

- a) Mr. Buchanan made a survey of the city of Patna in 1811 and every small street and colony is mentioned in his survey. It contains references to the sites sanctified by Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. It contains more than a hundred names of streets and colonies of Patna, there is mention of Bishambarpura.
- b) Even if we accept the existence of a small village Bishambarpura in place of Patna, it is not possible that a jeweller should be residing in a small village. Traders of jewelery are usually to be found in cities.
- c) Reference to Hajipur in the *Miharban Janamsakhi* seems correct. During the time of Guru Nanak, Hajipur was a huge city. According to *Muzaffarpur District Gazetteer* (1944, p. 74), there was a separate colony of jewellers which was named Jawahartola. Patna became prosperous during the times of Sher Shah Suri and Akbar, and just like in Hajipur, a colony of jewellers came up there also.

Patliputra were extant. Passing through these debris and crossing the Ganga, Guru Nanak reached Hajipur which was a famous city those days.²¹⁹ Hajipur is situated on the northern bank of the Ganges and opposite the city of Patna where the Gandak river merges with the Ganges. After crossing the Ganges, the Guru sat on the site where now stands the Nanak Shahi Gurdwara. This place is in the Ram Chaura Mohalla in Harihar colony.²²⁰

When Guru Nanak reached Hajipur, his companion Mardana was very hungry. The Guru sent him to the Jawahartola so that he got something to eat from the houses of the rich people living in that colony.²²¹ One of the jewellers gave him three paise. Mardana felt rather disappointed. He went to the next house where lived the jeweller named Salis Rai. He was a noble soul and his accountant, Adarka by name, was also a God-fearing person. As Mardana reached Salis Rai's house, he was having his meals.²²² The accountant, Adarka, came out and took Mardana to his master. Salis Rai saw that Mardana was quite hungry. So he fed him to his full and then gave him some money for his onward journey. Mardana accepted the money and returned to Guru Nanak in a happy frame of mind. The Guru asked him, for what purpose he had brought the money and wanted him to return the same. Mardana came back to Salis Rai and returned the money.

Salis Rai was highly impressed by this gesture. He took his accountant along and came to have a glimpse of the Guru. He also brought along some food which he presented to the Guru and said that earlier he considered Mardana a jewel with you but after meeting you I see jewels all around you. The Guru replied that those who

219. The town of Hajipur (a tehsil headquarter) is in Muzaffarpur district, and is an important town on the other side of the Ganga from Patna. It was founded by Haji Ilyas (Shamas-ud-Din Ilyas) between 1345-1388. It also remained the capital of Bihar for quite some time. See *Muzaffarpur District Gazetteer*.

220. As per the statement made by Sant Kartar Singh of Patna. Sant Kartar Singh got a lot of *kar seva* done at the Harimandar Sahib at Patna. He also got the *kar seva* done at the Gurdwara Hatt Sahib, Sultanpur (District Kapurthala). He was very well familiar with Patna and its surroundings.

221. The *Bala Janamsakhi* also gives the name Jawahartola which seems correct.

222. The episode of Salis Rai is found mentioned in the *Janamsakhi* versions of Bhai Bala and Bhai Mani Singh. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* versions do not mention it. The *Bala* and the *Miharban* texts say that Guru Nanak gave to Maradna the jewel of Name and not that of stone or something. Both the *Bala* and the *Mani Singh* versions narrate the episode as stated above.

have Divine Name in their eyes see nothing else. There are both *gurmukhs* (Guru-oriented persons) and *manmukhs* (self-oriented) in the world. Similarly, there is lotus as well as the frog in the water. Both of them perform different sorts of functions. Then the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Inside the pure water of the pool abide both lotus and algae.
 The lotus abiding in company of algae and the water,
 Yet by their pollution is untouched.
 Frog ! never shalt thou acquire illumination.
 Eating of these weeds, though in pure water abiding,
 Thou yet knowest not of *amrita*. (1 Pause)
 The frog in water ever abides, not so the humming-bee
 Yet from a height the fragrance of the lotus it smells.
 Lotus buds too from far, by sensing the moon, bow to it.
 Thou frog ! clever with thy *place* in water listen :
 In milk lie *amrita*, sweetness of sugar and honey :
 Thy nature thou dost not discard, like the flea,
 That is in love with blood, discarding milk.
 With the wise live the ignorant, who to Vedas and Shastras, listen,
without avail :
 Thus thy character thou givest not up, as cur's tail *that is not*
straightened.
 Those that are hypocrites, to the Name are not attached;
 Others at the Divine feet bow.
 Saith Nanak : Each receives what is primarily recorded :
 With the tongue the holy Name you utter.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 990

Salis Rai felt peace in his mind on listening to the hymn. He paid obeisance to the Guru and prayed that his offering be accepted. The Guru refused to accept money, but did accept the food. Salis Rai again prayed that he be assigned any service. The Guru advised him that it is not necessary that the virtue of Name is achieved only after acquiring some status. Therefore, one must not be proud of one's higher social status. The Guru also told him that his subordinate Adarka was on way to realizing Name and that he (although a subordinate in social life) was spiritually higher than him. Therefore, he deserved to be held in respect.

There was an old temple dedicated to Gajgrah near Hajipur. A fair, called the Sonpur fair, was held there on the full-moon night of the month of *Kartik* each year. Many pilgrims came on that day. Even otherwise the devotees of Vishnu kept pouring in throughout

the year. One day a devotee of Vishnu came to Guru Nanak and put him a question : "Mind seeks material wealth; material wealth cannot be attained without ego; and ego takes one away from God. How can one realize God?" In response, the Guru recited the following hymn :

With the body destroyed, whose is *hoarded* wealth ?
How without the Master's guidance may the Name Divine be
attained ?
The wealth of the Name is our companion, friend,
That from the Master, day and night engaged in holy God-
absorption, comes. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 416

This provided that Vaishnavite the required solace and he fell at the Guru's feet. The Guru spent some time at Hajipur and then proceeded eastwards.

Kamrup

Guru Nanak left Hajipur (Patna) and set out on his way parallel to the Ganges. Passing through the cities of Monghyr and Bhagalpur, he reached Kant Nagar, a town in the Karyar tehsil of present day Poornia district. This town was situated on the bank of the Ganges and near the famous city, Kargola. Here stands an old *gurdwara* in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit. According to a local tradition, the Guru had stayed here.²²³

From Kant Nagar, the Guru went farther eastwards. There the Ganges takes a turn towards south. Here the river Mahananda coming from the north merges with the Ganges. In this region, the Ganges is known by the name of *Kalindri*.²²⁴ There was a town called Malda on the site where the Kalindri and the Mahananda meet. This town was a huge halting point for the boats which sailed on these two rivers.²²⁵ Guru Nanak took off at this point. It is said that a

223. Shri Raghubans Prasad Singh, the owner of the Kursela Estate in Poornia district, writes vide his letter No.D.O.2/68, dated 7th February 1968 : "In the Poornia district, Guru Nanak took up dwelling on the bank of the Ganges in village Kant Nagar which falls in Barai Police Station. There is a *gurdwara* raised in his memory." In this letter he also makes mention of several other *gurdwaras*.

Kargola was an important ford of the Ganges since olden times. Guru Nanak's halt in this village seems correct.

224. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, see Malda.

225. *The Imperial Gazetteer*, Oxford University Press, 1908, Vol. 17, p. 83.

money-lender by the name of Ram Dev met Guru Nanak here. He was much impressed by Guru Nanak. The Guru stayed here for some time.²²⁶ Then he set out further towards south-east. Now he took the route alongside the Ganges towards the south : it was later on turned into a *pucca* road by Sher Shah Suri. This route passed through Maksudabad (Murshadabad) and then took a turn eastwards and reached Sonar village.²²⁷ This village is 15 miles (21 kms.) towards north of Dhaka (now Bangladesh). Guru Nanak did not go to Sonar village and instead turned towards south to reach Dhaka. Here was an ancient pilgrim centre, the temple of Dhakeswari goddess. It is after the name of this goddess that the town of Dhaka was named. During those days Dhaka was famous only for the temple of goddess Dhakeswari. It became the capital town of the region in 1608.²²⁸ Dhaka was situated on the bank of the *Bohi Ganga* which was then an important tributary of the Padma river.²²⁹

Guru Nanak halted on the northern side of Dhaka at a site which is these days called the Rear Bazar. There lived the potters, as they do even these days. The tradition of Guru Nanak's visit to this place still survives among these people. A well of Guru Nanak's days is still extant.²³⁰ It is said that the Guru dug up the earth here with his wooden staff to make this well. Before the partition of India in 1947, a fair used to be held here every year in the month of *Chet*.²³¹

From Dhaka Guru Nanak set out for Kamrup. Those days the most frequented route of travel from Dhaka to Kamrup was the Brahmaputra river. The present day districts of Goalpara, Kamrup-Rangpur and Cooch-Bihar constituted Kamrup. Guru Nanak boarded a boat in the Brahmaputra and reached Dhubri which is these days an important town of the Goalpara district. Guru Tegh Bahadur later on got a raised platform in the memory of Guru Nanak by bringing in earth from Rangamati.²³² The Goalpara Gazetteer

226. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, 4th ed., p. 175.

227. Sita Ram Kohli and Hari Ram Gupta, *Historical Atlas of India*, Allahabad, 1954, p. 17.

228. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. 16, p. 116.

229. *Ibid.*

230. *Dhaka District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1912, p. 70.

231. G.B. Singh, *Sikh Relics in Eastern Bengal*, Vol. I, 1967, p. 75.

232. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, (Orient Longman), p. 55.

records that the Muslim soldiers helped, on the asking of Guru Tegh Bahadur, by bringing in earth in their shields.²³³ From Dhubri Guru Nanak went on to Gauwahati by boat in the Brahmaputra. The town was then named Prayag Jyotispur.

In the beginning of the 16th century, the people of Kamrup were very proficient in *tantra*. They were worshippers of Shakti. Although the Muslims had once demolished the temple of Kamakhya goddess, but the people's belief could not be shattered. Mostly the people of Kochi tribe inhabited the Kamrup region. They worshipped goddess Kamakhya and offered human sacrifice to the goddess.²³⁴ Guru Nanak stayed outside a town in Kamrup. The Guru's companion, Mardana, felt rather hungry at the time. The Guru allowed him to go into the town and have something to eat. When Mardana went and stood outside the door of a house, the womenfolk inside invited him in. With the help of their tantric power, they took away Mardana's power to think and speak. They almost turned him into a ram who simply followed them.²³⁵

The Guru waited for Mardana for some time but thereafter he himself went inside the town in search of him. Those women tried to do with Guru Nanak what they had earlier done with Mardana. However, all their magical power proved futile in face of the Guru's spiritual strength. They all bowed before the Guru. Then the Guru brought Mardana back to his senses and asked him to play rebeck. The Guru recited the following hymn :

The woman of merit with her Lord has enjoyed bliss;
Why must one without merit in jealousy wail ?
Should she acquire merit, the Lord shall favour her too.
The Lord is so delightfully playful—why must the woman seek
pleasure with others ? (I Pause)

233. *The Goalpara District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1905, p. 59. According to Giani Gian Singh, Rattan Rai, the son of a local king, once visited Guru Gobind Singh in his court at Anandpur Sahib. His father, Raja Ram, had become a Sikh of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

234. *The Kamrup District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1905, p. 91. See also "Saktism in Assam" in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, New York, Vol. II, 1958, p. 134.

235. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* gives the name of the local Empress as Nurshah. However, this name is not confirmed by any other *Janamsakhi* source. The 1658 mss. of the *Bala Janamsakhi* does not mention the name of Nurshah. The *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions also do not give this name. Both the *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala* texts make mention of Mardana being made a ram by some local women which appears to be correct. According to *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, these hymns were recited in Kamrup and this is confirmed by the contents of these hymns.

Make good deeds the magical rites, the heart the thread;
 The bead to string it with money is not purchased :
 To the heart should it be sewn.
 As is the path indicated, I traverse it not, yet claim to have arrived
 at *the destination*.
 Woman ! to thy Lord art thou not communicative—
 How in His home mayst live ?
 Saith Nanak : None other than the sole Lord is there.
 Shouldst thou with the Lord maintain love, to thee shall He grant
 bliss. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 557

Then an idea occurred to these women that this man of God might wish to listen to some song. They thought that they might still be able to put him in their trap with the help of their songs and dance. So they tried to please and charm the Guru with their songs and dance but to no avail. The Guru recited the following hymn :

In the realm of mind are playing cymbals and bells of *stray thinking*.
 A drum is *constantly* playing—such is the world.
The restless mind like Narad is enacting a dance—
 This is the influence of Kali-Yuga.
 Where in this age may those with continence and virtue rest their
 feet ?
 World that art gone blind ! realize the Lord. (Pause I)
In this age disciples from their mentors receive sustenance—
 Living with them for attraction of food.
Little it avails if one thus for a hundred years lives with him and feeds.
 Whoever realizes the Lord, is truly approved.
In this age none at sight of *suffering* takes pity.
 No one from receiving graft restrains himself.
 Rulers administer justice as is their palm greased.
 None by invoking the Name of God is persuaded.
 Saith Nanak ! Men are human in shape and name—
 Their doings dog-like : at the door waiting to carry out commands.
 He who by the Master's grace knows himself to be a passing lodger
 in *this world*.
 Alone may get honour at the Divine Portal.

—Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 349-50

When even the song and the dance failed to have any effect on the Guru, they came with a lot of material things which they offered to him. However, Guru Nanak remained absorbed in his own thoughts. When they had exhausted all their tricks and energy and failed, they finally fell on the Guru's feet. The Guru advised

them to remember the Name Divine. He stayed there for some time and then proceeded ahead.

'Live and Prosper—Get Uprooted and Disperse'

In the sixteenth century the boundary of the Kamrup went only up to the Karna river, and the area of Assam began with the present day district of Darang.²³⁶ That is perhaps why in the *Janamsakhis* the Kamrup and the Assam (Assa country)²³⁷ have been mentioned as two different regions. In Kamrup, the Kochi kings reigned whereas Assam was with the Ahom kings. It was after the name of the ruling tribe (Ahom) that the region also came to be known as Ahom, Asham, or Assam. The Ahoms worshipped Sakti. They were rather orthodox and tolerated no new ideology. This region gave birth to a holy man called Sankradeva (1449-1569) who preached Vaishnavism, but the Sakts paid no heed to him. The king of the day, Raja Swarg Narain (1497-1593) who was earlier named Chuhumung decreed his exile.²³⁸

Guru Nanak left Kamrup and travelled eastwards along the Brahmaputra river. He stayed at several places on the way. Guru Nanak on his way entered a town where the inhabitants began to laugh at and taunt him and did not let him stay there. The Guru left the place saying 'May this town flourish.'

Travelling further the Guru sojourned in a village. Here the inhabitants served the Guru and Mardana very well. The Guru left this place saying 'May this village disperse'. When Mardana heard these words, he asked the Guru why he had said so : those who did not let us stay put were blessed to flourish and those who served us so well have been cursed to get uprooted and disperse. The Guru

236. According to Alexander Cunningham, modern Assam was called Kamrup in olden times. Heun Tsang has recorded this region as Kamrup. In the medieval times, the Ahom tribes which were a branch of the Shan tribes conquered the eastern region of Kamrup. The *Ain-i-Akbari* also refers to Kamrup and Assam as two different regions. During the times of Guru Nanak, they were two distinct regions. The Kochi kings ruled in Kamrup and the Ahom kings held Assam.

237. Assam has been mentioned as Asa country in this episode and this is confirmed by a reference to Raja Samandr who was a king of Assam. When Ahoms entered Assam, they had twelve chiefs who called themselves twelve '*bhoies*' and claimed to be progeny of Raja Samandr. See *Encyclopaedia of Religion and ethics*, New York, Vol. II, p. 135.

238. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

told Mardana when the good people will go to other places, people at large will become good in their company. On the other hand, if wicked people of a town go to other places, they will spread vice among those who come in their contact. On listening this, Mardana bowed before the Guru.

Deliverance of Demons

Guru Nanak travelled eastwards on the bank of the Brahmaputra river and reached Golaghat town. This town is situated on the eastern bank of the Dhanasri river and falls in the district of Sibsagar, in the extreme east of present day Assam State. The valley of river that passes by Golaghat is called Dhanasri valley²³⁹ because this was the plain region along the Dhanasri river. This river originates from the Naga mountain and separates Sibsagar district from Nowgong district and thereafter flows towards north-west to finally merge into the Brahmaputra. On the north of the Dhanasri valley were wide plains surrounded by Naga and Mukir mountains. The Naga people reside here. They sacrificed humans and were cannibals.²⁴⁰

When Guru Nanak and Mardana reached the Dhanasri valley, they were captured by the Nagas. They found the Guru and Mardana performing *kirtan*, fully transcended from worldly cares. When they attempted to kill them, they were charmed by the divine glow and spiritual strength of the Guru.²⁴¹ They realized that they were not

239. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* calls it 'Dhanasri des or country.'

240. The words of the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* "where the demons ate humans in the Dhanasri country, Guru Nanak reached there" suggest that the reference is to the Dhanasri region and the Naga people. *The Imperial Gazetteer* records about the Nagas as follows :

"The custom which has attracted most attention and which differentiates Nagas from other Tibet Burmah tribes such as Bodas, Mukris and Daflas and such Himalayan people, is their craving for human heads. Any head was valued, whether of man, woman or child and victims were usually murdered not in fight but by treachery." (*Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XVIII, p. 287*)

241. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* narrates that the Nagas got hold of both Guru Nanak and Mardana. Then being impressed by the Guru, they freed them both. The *Bala* version says that Bala was captured by the demon and began to fry him in an oil cauldron but the oil went cold. Thereafter is given Guru Arjan's hymn which refers to "cooling of the hot cauldron." The *Bala* text also names the demon as Kauda, but this is not given in any other *Janamsakhi*. The *Mani Singh* version says that the demon came to the Guru, listened to the *kirtan* and became his disciple. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* seems closer to truth. It is identical with the *Mani Singh* version.

ordinary mortals. They were highly impressed by the divine word and they freed them. The Guru returned after teaching them the Name Divine.

Guru Nanak travelled via the Brahmaputra to Gauwahati. From there a hilly route leads to Shillong. Guru Nanak set out on this route and passed through Jowai. Therefrom he took the Jainatipura hilly route on which only horses and human could walk and reached Sylhet. Jainatipura is 64 miles (102 kms.) from modern Shillong via Jowai and Sylhet is 26 miles (40 kms.) away from Jainatipura.²⁴² There used to be an old *gurdwara* in Sylhet in the memory of Guru Nanak. Tara Singh Narotam has referred to it in his *Guru Tirath Sangrah*. Maybe, the *gurdwara* got destroyed in the earthquake of 1897 because it does not find mention in the books published thereafter.

Sylhet is on the south of the Brahmaputra valley and falls in the valley of the Surma or Bark rivers. That is why it was closer to East Bengal. In the beginning of the 16th century, the Muslims had established themselves here. Shah Jalal had been a known faqir of this region. He passed away in 1531.²⁴³ This tomb and shrine have been the special memorials in Sylhet even today. Shah Jalal was a contemporary of Guru Nanak. It is just possible that Guru Nanak and Shah Jalal might have met here.²⁴⁴

There are several routes from Sylhet to the modern city of Calcutta.²⁴⁵ People in Sylhet region generally travelled by boat.²⁴⁶ So Guru Nanak also sailed in a boat in the Surma river towards east

242. *Sylhet District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1965, p. 186.

243. *Ibid.*, 1905, p. 81.

244. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* mentions the Guru's meeting and discourse with Farid.

Its author says that "Shaikh Farid was the Pir of Patan. Shaikh Brahm occupied his seat." See *Sakhi* "Dialogue with Shaikh Brahm" which shows that the writer was not ignorant about the long past death of Baba Farid *Ganj-i-Shakar*. Then the *Sakhi* "Dialogue with Shaikh Farid in Asa Country" wherein dialogue is stated to have been held with Farid shows that this Shaikh Farid is some other Muslim holy man. It is just possible that he was a disciple of Shaikh Farid. Discourse with Shah Jalal in Sylhet seems quite possible and correct. Whether or not Shah Jalal was from the Chisti Sufi tradition like Farid can be said with more certainty only after we possess more information on Jalal. According to the *Vilayatvali* text, Shah Jalal appears to be a disciple of Baba Farid.

245. The reference to Calcutta town comes in a poem written in 1495. See *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. IX, p. 2621.

246. *Sylhet District Gazetteer*, p. 183.

and passed by south-west Dhaka in the Bark river. It appears that at several places the Guru went by boat and at others he walked on foot. Ultimately he reached the road which passes by Calcutta and leads to Ganjam. Ganjam was a town in the south of Orissa. Travelling farther on this road, he reached Cuttack, the principal town of Orissa.

The most famous temple in Orissa was Jagannath Temple, Puri. Because of this the king of Orissa was also reverentially called Jagannath.²⁴⁷ When Guru Nanak arrived in Cuttack, Raja Prataprudradev was the king of Orissa. He had ascended the throne after the death of his father, Raja Parsotamdev, in 1497.²⁴⁸

Prataprudradev belonged to the Solar dynasty and was a Vaishnavite by faith. It was during his regime that Vaishnavism spread the most.²⁴⁹ Chaitanya (1485-1533) also visited this temple during his regime in 1510. His teachings also helped in the spread of Vaishnavism. When Prataprudradev learnt that a holy man from North India has arrived and that he is accompanied by a rebeck player who sings hymns, he rode his horse and set out to meet Guru Nanak.²⁵⁰ The people who sat near the Guru made way for the King who sat close to the Guru. After sitting for a while, the King asked the Guru what this world was : he himself knew nothing about it. All the creatures herein are different from one another, some are holy whereas others are cheats. What image can we perceive of God from His creation ? In reply the Guru recited the following hymn :

In the lake of holy congregation grow unmatched lotuses,
That are ever in bloom and *full* of fragrance.

247. Similarly the king of Rameshwaram was called King Rameshwaram. See *A Rameshwaram Temple Guide*. Raja Udai Singh of Kaithal was respectfully referred to as Pehowa King or King Pehowa since Pehowa, the famous centre of Hindu pilgrimage fell within his kingdom.

248. *Puri District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1908, p. 30.

249. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

250. Although this episode appears only in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, and *Vilayatvali*, *Bala* and *Mani Singh* versions are silent on it, yet it is certain that all *Janamsakhi* texts agree on the Guru's visit to Jagannath Puri. The route to Puri was via Cuttack because the sea route was not safe as the boats got drowned because of storms. See *Puri District Gazetteer*, 1908, p. 102. So a meeting with the king of Cuttack on reaching there is a possibility and seems to be correct. Bhai Vir Singh, in his *Guru Nanak Chamatkar*, records the dialogue related by the *mahant* of the Cuttack *gurdwara*. According to him also, Guru Nanak met the king of Cuttack. See *Guru Nanak Chamatkar* (7th edition), p. 305.

In that Lake swans pick up orient pearls—
Such swans are possessed of all faculties, being of the Divine Essence.
 All that is visible, takes birth and is shattered :
 These lotuses without the water of this lake grow not. (Pause I)
 Rare are such as have realization and learn the Divine mystery—
 The Vedas only discourse of *maya* of three branches.
 One that serves the holy Preceptor, the supreme state attains,
 And in awareness of the cosmic Note and Creative Essence is absorbed.
 Whoever to the liberated ones is attached, in love of *God* is dyed;
 Is ever in bloom, a king of kings.
 Whomsoever Thou in Thy grace dost save,
 Thought a sinking stone, is made to swim.
 Such a one in the three worlds beholds His Light, and in all three
 worlds realizes Him;
 His mind away from the world turned, in his self He attains Him.
 Those that day and night with concentration perform devotion,
 Nanak at their feet offers obeisance. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 352

When the king listened to this, he bowed before the Guru, paid his obeisance and departed.²⁵¹ There is an old *gurdwara* in Cuttack in memory of Guru Nanak.²⁵²

On the Way to Jagannath Puri

There was an old route taken by passengers from Cuttack to Puri. This was also called the Jagannath Road. Guru Nanak took this route to reach Puri.

When the King of Orissa met the Guru at Cuttack, the news spread to Puri and other places also. There lived a *pandit* in Puri those days. He was an expert in Logic and was quite rich. He was a priest of many pilgrims who would put up with him. He was quite clever and he became known by the name of Kaliyug.²⁵³ When he learnt that the King had respected the Guru, he came to the old road of Jagannath well equipped with his knowledge of Logic, Tantrism and wealth so as overpower the Guru. At first he tried to overawe the Guru. He took to several dreadful postures. Bhai Mardana was

251. This narrative is based on the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. See *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p. 255.

252. *Guru Nanak Chamatkar*, p. 305.

253. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* mentions the episode of Kaliyug. Both Giani Gian Singh and Bhai Vir Singh agree that there was a *panda* in Puri who met the Guru. Being clever and expert in polemic, he got the nick-name Kaliyug.

terrified, but the Guru told him not to be afraid. When nothing worked, he came closer to the Guru and tried to entice the Guru with his wealth, to enchant him with offerings of pearls, mansions and maids. However, the Guru held his ground and asked Mardana to play rebeck. He recited the following hymn :

Palaces with pearls erected, with gems embellished;
 With musk, saffron, agar and sandalwood-paste plastered,
 A sheer joy to the heart—
 Lest in these *delights* involved I forget Thee,
 Thy Name from the mind effaced.
 May I burn in flames, should I without the Lord live.
 My Preceptor have I consulted. No shelter without the Lord may be
 found. (Pause I)
 Were the ground with rubies studded,
 With a bedstead spread with gems inlaid;
 Couched in it a female of surpassing beauty,
 Her face with jewels decked, in dalliance engaged—
 Lest in these pleasures involved I forget Thee,
 Thy Name from my mind effaced.
 Were I to be a Siddha, master of accomplishment, calling forth
 miracles,
 At will oncealing and manifesting my form, centre of the world's
 faith :
 Lest in these wonders engrossed I forget Thee,
 Thy Name from my mind effaced.
 Were I to be a monarch, gathering vast hordes,
 On a throne setting my foot,
 My writ running far and wide—
 Nanak ! all is void.
 Lest dazzled *by such splendour* I forget Thee.
 Thy Name from my mind effaced. —*Guru Granth Sahib, p. 14*

On hearing this, Kaliyug fell at the Guru's feet.²⁵⁴ Thus discoursing with Kaliyug, the Guru reached Jagannath Puri.

Jagannath Puri

Guru Nanak set out for Puri from Cuttack. There is a *gurdwara* erected in the Guru's memory : it is called Baoli Sahib.²⁵⁵

254. This episode is found in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* and not in any other version.

As per the details given in the *Vilayatvali* text, the episode seems to have taken place on the way from Cuttack to Puri.

255. Tara Singh Narotam, *Gur Tirath Sangrah*, 1884, pp. 9-24.

About the Jagannath temple, the Western scholars hold that it was earlier a Buddhist shrine and that in medieval times it took the form of a Vishnu temple with the help of Ganga and Solar-dynasty kings of Orissa.²⁵⁶ At the time of Guru Nanak, it was a famous temple of Vishnu. Pilgrims came from far and near to visit this shrine. Chaitanya (1485-1533), the famous saint of Bengal, came to Puri when he was 25 and thereafter spent the major part of his life there. The sight of ocean and sky meeting together here; so impressed Chaitanya that once he jumped into the sea to meet God in a moment of ecstasy. He was taken out by a fisherman with the help of his net.²⁵⁷ Some writers opine that Guru Nanak met Chaitanya at Puri and sang hymns in his company.²⁵⁸

The town of Puri with its sea waves, breeze blowing over the sea, moon and stars in the sky looked very enchanting to Guru Nanak. It appeared to him as though all the creation of Nature performed *arti* for the Lord. Once the Guru went to the Jagannath temple itself and witnessed the *pandas* performing *arti* there. While they all stood during the *arti*, Guru Nanak kept sitting. When the *arti* was over, the *pandas* asked him why did he not get up for the *arti*? The Guru replied that all the objects of Nature were consistently performing His *arti* and that was the real *arti*. The *pandas* asked him to recite for them the *arti* he spoke of. Hearing this, the Guru recited the following hymn:²⁵⁹

Placed on the salver of heaven are the lamps sun and moon,
With bright pearls of the constellations—

256. *Puri District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1908, pp. 87-95.

257. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

258. Ishwar Das, in his *Chaitanya Bhagvat*, writes that Chaitanya sang hymns along with Guru Nanak. In the 47th Chapter of this book is mentioned that Chaitanya deputed one of his disciples, Udiata to attend on the Guru. See Tarlochan Singh in *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, September 1963, pp. 29-31.

The *Puri District Gazetteer* states that Chaitanya came to Puri in 1510 and thereafter remained there. If the Guru visited Puri after 1510, then the Guru's meeting with Chaitanya could be possible. However, the *Janamsakhi* tradition does not testify this.

259. This episode is not found in the *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala* versions of *Janamsakhi*. The *Miharban* version mentions that this hymn was recited at Rameshwaram, while *Mani Singh* text says the hymn was recited at Jagannath Puri. The word "*malanlo*" used here in Tamil means the air that comes from the eastern shore of the sea. The words like *anahata sabda vajant bheri* used in the *arti* conform to the Oriya language. It shows that the hymn might have been recited at Jagannath Puri.

Thy offering :

Fragrant mountain breezes Thy incense, the wind Thy fan;

The entire blossoming vegetation Thy flower-offerings.

Wonderful is this *arti*, of the entire creation to Thee, Thou annuller
of transmigration :

The unstruck harmony

Orchestrates Thy worship. (I Pause)

Thousand Thy eyes, Thy shapes,

Yet no eyes dost Thou wear or shape.

Thousand Thy lotus feet; of thousand waves Thy wafted fragrance,

Yet invisible, wonderfully captivating Thy essence.

The light in all creation—Thou who are Light !

Thy effulgence illuminating the visible universe !

The Master's Word alone makes manifest the light !

Whatever *action* pleases Him, is the highest prayer !

My heart yearns for touch of Thy lotus feet fragrant,

In thirst ever unquenchable;

Bestow on the Chatrik Nanak the water of Thy bounty :

In Thy Name grant him abode ! —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 663

When the *pandas* heard this art, they were highly impressed.

Another Visit by the King of Orissa

The King of Orissa, Raja Prataprudradev, had called on Guru Nanak at Cuttack. However, when he learnt that the Guru had gone to Puri, he also went to Puri and had a glimpse of the Guru again there. The Guru recognized the king because they had met earlier at Cuttack. The Guru asked for his welfare. The king asked him as to how he had acquired the gift of Name that he possessed. In response the Guru uttered the following hymn :²⁶⁰

In contemplation of the Name immaculate, lie *boons* of Nine Treasures
and Yogic accomplishments.

As are suppressed evil propensities,

In all creation is seen the Lord pervasive.

260. This episode has been taken from the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. See *Miharban Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, pp.200-02 (App. III). There the king's name is written as Raja Bharthari instead of Prataprudradev. Both recognizing each other is clearly stated. Earlier Baba Nanak was in a trance, but as he saw Bharthari, he came out of the trance. Thereafter the king asked this question. This episode is not found in any other *Janamsakhi* version, but it seems true in keeping with the situation. In the history of Orissa, Prataprudradev is known as a great devotee of the Vaishnavite tradition. See *Puri District Gazetteer*, p. 30.

As is the self in purity enveloped, release from the Three Qualities comes.

Thus is the Master's teaching to the self proved beneficent.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 220

After listening to this hymn, the king bowed to him. The Guru stayed at Puri for some time and then left southwards via Cuttack.

On the Bank of a Pond

From Jagannath Puri, Guru Nanak and Mardana took a southwards turn.²⁶¹ They went from Puri to Cuttack and thence to Ganjam. There was an old road leading to Ganjam from the Bengal.²⁶² From Ganjam they travelled further southwards on the road to Kanchipuram or Kanjivaram²⁶³ and reached a place now called Guntur. It is a famous town of Andhra Pradesh and the principal town of a district by this name. This town is 60 miles (96 kms.) West of Masulipatam and just six miles (9.6 kms.) east of the adjoining mountain. A *gurdwara* stands there in the memory of the Guru's visit. This shrine was got built by Chandu Lal, a minister in the state of Hyderabad in the first half of the 19th century.²⁶⁴ He built shrines at five such places in the south which had been sanctified by the Guru's visit.²⁶⁵ Guntur was one of them. The priest here has been an Udasi.²⁶⁶

The word Guntur is a derivation of the Telugu word *gunta* which means water-pond.²⁶⁷ In the 16th century, Guntur was not so famous a town. Guntur became famous in the 18th century when

261. In the *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhis*, Guru Nanak's first odyssey ends here, and from Puri Guru Nanak is said to have returned to Sultanpur. However, the *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions relate that the Guru went towards south after completing his sojourn in the east. This contention appears to be nearer truth because if the Guru had to visit the South, the Guru's return from Puri to Sultanpur and then undertaking another arduous journey seems improbable. The *Miharban* text clearly states that the Guru turned southwards from the east.

262. *The Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. IX, pp. 92-93.

263. This was an old route leading to the South.

264. Chandu Lal had been a minister in the Hyderabad state. He passed away in 1845. See *Indian Express*, Madurai edition, 23rd June 1968 which contains an essay titled "Once a Prosperous Sikh Colony."

265. A statement made by the *Mahant*, Gurdwara Nanak Udasi Math, Rameshwaram.

266. *Ibid.*

267. *The Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 12, p. 389.

the French came here and got impressed by the scenic beauty of the place.²⁶⁸ Guru Nanak also seems to have been much impressed by this beautiful place. He sojourned at this place for some time and recited a hymn, giving examples of a frog.²⁶⁹

After resting a while on the bank of this pond the Guru started his travel southwards.

The Jain Ascetic at Kanchipuram

Leaving Gantur and passing through the area around the modern city of Chennai, Guru Nanak travelled southwards and reached what is now known as Kanchipuram and what was called Kanchi or Kanchivaram by the British rulers. It is situated in the district of Changanalpat, 45 miles (72 kms.) south-west of Chennai.

Kanchipuram is among the most famous ancient pilgrim centres of India. Hieun Tsang visited this place during the seventh century. He records that the population of Jainas here was equal to those of the Buddhists and Brahmins.²⁷⁰ This city has been the capital of Pala and Chola kings. Emperor Krishna Deva, the most powerful king of Vijaynagar state, and a contemporary of Guru Nanak got two temples built here in 1502.²⁷¹ During Guru Nanak's time also, temples consecrated to both Shiva and Vishnu existed here. Now there also stands a *gurdwara* in commemoration of Guru Nanak's visit.²⁷² It was managed by *Mahant* Narinder Nath up to the 1960s.

268. *The Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 12, p. 389.

269. The hymn given here is the one which is found in the episode of Salis Rai at Patna, related earlier. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* (p. 276) states that as "Guru Nanak reached this place in the south, he happened to see a river there. As he approached it, he found it to be a pond." This episode is not found in any other version except the *Miharban*. The details given in this incident, the geographical location of the temple in Guntur and a historical shrine there all indicate that this incident did take place.

270. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. X, pp. 377-78.

271. *Ibid.*

272. During the first half of the 19th century, Wazir Chandu Lal Bedi of Hyderabad traced out sites sacred to Guru Nanak's visit and got *gurdwaras* erected on five such places. These were—Guntur, Kanchipuram, Trivanmalai, Srirangam and Rameshwaram. The *gurdwaras* at Kanchipuram, Trivanmalai and Rameshwaram were managed by *Mahant* Narinder Nath of Jalandhar during the 1960s. This information is based on the statement of *Mahant* Harcharan Singh of Rameshwaram *gurdwara*.

One day Guru Nanak went to a village called Triparutikumram, two miles (3.2 kms.) south of Kanchipuram. Here was a Jaina temple of the times of Chola Kings. When the priest of the temple learnt that a saint from north India had arrived, he came out to receive him. Coming out, he asked : "You take any kind of fresh and old food and drink water without filtering and kill creatures ?"²⁷³ The Guru remained silent for some time often listening this question, and then recited the following hymn :

Some there are that their head-hair pluck, and drink foul water;
 Beg and eat others' leavings.
 Their ordure they scatter, inhale its foul smell,
 And of water are scared.
 Their heads like sheep are plucked,
 With ashes their hands smeared.
 Their parents' earnings they lay waste;
 Their families around them piteously wailing.
 After death neither flour-pies nor food-offerings on leaves to them are
 dedicated.
 Neither eleventh-day obsequies nor lamp-lighting,
 At sixty-eight bathing-spots find they no prop;
 Brahmins their food-offerings accept not.
 Day and night with filth covered, their forehead without the paste-
 mark.
 Ever sit they in a cluster like mourners,
 Attending not religious assemblies.
 To their waists are tied begging bowls, dangling tassels,
 In single file they march.
 They neither are *Yogis* nor *Jangams*,
 Nor are they Mohammadans.
 Cursed of God, they wander about *as* lost—
 Corrupted the whole herd of them.
 God alone takes life, and grants it—
 Lapsed are such in giving charities and in holy bathing;
 In their plucked hair falls dust.
 Water that they abjure, is source of the fourteen jewels,
 Churned by the *mudrachal* mountain.

273. This episode is found only in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. The priest of the Jaina temple is named Anubhavi, and it is said that he met Guru Nanak during his odyssey in the South. An old and famous Jaina temple existed nearby Kanchi, hence, the possibility of the genuineness of narrative relating to this episode. Kanchi was then situated on the old path from Trivanmalai to Rameshwaram.

The sixty-eight bathing places that they shun, by the gods are sanctified;
 Concourses there are held and divine discourses delivered;
 With limbs purified is recited *namaz* and *puja*;
 The wise ever purify themselves with bath.
 By bathing the limbs the living and the dead are rendered pure.
 Saith Nanak : These with hair dishevelled are Satan's *disciples*;
 Nothing *good* to them appeals.
 From raining *clouds* comes to creation joy,
 The life-giving process in water is implicit.
 From rain-clouds grows grain, sugarcane and cotton,
 That to the nakedness of all provides cover.
 From rain-clouds comes grass on which feed kine,
 Whose curd the womenfolk churn.
 With *ghee* from that obtained, are performed burnt offerings, ritual
 feasts and manifold worship,
 That all actions ennoble.
 The preceptor is *like* the ocean,
 Devotion is like the rivers;
 Bathing in these brings exaltation.
 Saith Nanak : Should these of plucked hair abjure bathing,
 On their head they merit throwing seven handfuls of dust.

—Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 149-50

Listening to the hymn, that Jain bowed to the Guru.²⁷⁴ The Guru spent some time at Kanchi and then went further to South.

The Entire World is Full of Pain

Guru Nanak, accompanied by Mardana, continued to travel southwards from Kanchi and reached the town Trivanmalai. The town these days falls within the district of South Arcot. In the 16th century, it was situated on the highway leading to South. On its western side were pathways passing through mountains.²⁷⁵ In modern times roads to all different directions take off from here. The word 'trivanmalai' means the sacred fire aflame on the mountain.²⁷⁶ It is said that once Shiva's consort Parvati put her hands on Shiva's eyes, thus causing darkness in the entire world. At this, Shiva got

274. This entire episode is based on the *Sakhi* of Anubhavi, a Jaina ascetic, as given in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. See *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, *Sakhi* No. 43 (App.43-44).

275. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Madras Southern Districts, 1901, South Arcot, p. 30.

276. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XXIII, p. 401.

annoyed with Parvati and sent her down to the world. Trivanmalai was one of the places where she did penance. For some time, she meditated here. Then Shiva sprouted fire on the adjoining hill, thus indicating that her lapse had been condoned. Thus, the town that came into being on the foot of the hill on which fire had sprouted came to be known as Trivanmalai.²⁷⁷ It is a very ancient town where there is a very beautiful Shiva temple of great antiquity.

Guru Nanak stayed put in Trivanmalai for some time. Here stands a *gurdwara* in the memory of his visit. The *gurdwara* was managed by *Mahant* Narinder Nath until the 1960s.²⁷⁸

While putting up here, Guru Nanak thought that no god or goddess had been able to get free from the consequences of his or her *karmas*. Even Parvati had also to resort to penance.²⁷⁹ It is only through the Name Divine that one could escape from the effect of *karma*. Here he recited the following hymn :

Indra had to wail, as with thousand marks of infamy was he branded;
Persuram wailed as *powerless* he returned home.

Ajai had to wail as *horse-dung* he had to swallow that he gave in
charity.

On such as these falls chastizement from the Divine Portal.

Rama wailed when exiled,

And *thought* of separation from Sita and Lakshman.

Ten-headed Ravana wailed on losing Lanka—

He who by beating a hand-drum eloped with Sita.

Wailed the Pandavas who were turned into labourers—

Those who in the Lord's presence had passed their days.

Janmeja wailed as he was gone astray;

A single lapse turned him sinner.

Shaikhs and other categories of the holy in Islam wail,

Lest to them in the last hour should suffering befall.

Kings wailed as they got their ears pierced, from door to door begging.

The covetous wail as wealth they hoard;

Pandits wail whose learning has forsaken them; the young bride
bemoans her Lord's absence.

Saith Nanak : The whole world in suffering is involved.

277. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XXIII, p. 401.

278. This *gurdwara* is one of the five got built by Wazir Chandu Lal of Hyderabad.

279. The episode narrated here has been based on the narrative of *Miharban Janamsakhi* (*Sakhi* : "The Guru in the Deccan *dehura*", App. 112-37, pp.203-04). It is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*. It is said herein that as the Guru stayed here, a brick of the temple one day hit him on the head. The Guru uttered this hymn at that time." This is not confirmed by any other source.

Such alone *in the end* triumph as to the holy Name are attached.
No other ritual avails. —Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 953-54

The Guru stayed here for some time and then travelled on to the South.

Sri Lanka

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Trivanmalai to travel further south and reached Trichnapalli. Just near by Trichnapalli was the most famous temple, called Sri Rangam; of the Tamil Alwar saints who were Vaishnavites. This temple is situated in between the rivers of Kaveri and Kolerun. In fact, the word *sri rangam* in Tamil language means the one situated between two rivers. It was the greatest temple of the Vaishnavites in the South and it was here that Ramanuja, the famous Vaishnavite saint and a leader of the Bhakti movement spent the last years of his life.²⁸⁰ This temple has seven circumambulatory paths. It is said that Guru Nanak stayed in this temple for some time. Here was also a *gurdwara* in commemoration of his visit, but it has with the passage of time fallen down.²⁸¹

From Trichnapalli Guru Nanak took a boat via the Kaveri and reached Nagapatnam. This was an old port of India from where the people embarked on ships to reach Sri Lanka. Various evidences have been found that testify to the existence of transportation between southern India and the eastern side of Sri Lanka.²⁸² There was a very old Hindu temple in Trinkomli on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. This temple was pulled down by the Portugese in the 17th Century.²⁸³ There was another port in the south of Trinkomli known as Matiakalam or Madakulapa : its modern name is Batticola. This new name was given to it by the Dutch.²⁸⁴ Madakulapa was a very old colony of the Tamils. It finds mention even in the *Sakandh*

280. *A Short Note on Sri Ranganatha Swami Temple*, Sri Rangam, Madras State.

281. It was also one of the *gurdwaras* got erected by Chandu Lal.

282. A part of the Rameshwaram Temple and a temple of Tanjore were built by Sri Lankan kings prior to Guru Nanak's times. See *A Guide to Sri Rama Natham Swami Temple*.

283. Sir William Jones writes in the Ceylon Literary Register, 24th September 1886, p. 43 : "This island was peopled, time out of memory, by the Hindu race. The temple which stood at Trincomalee is not to be forgotten. It would have remained for the present day a venerable relic, had not the misguided religious zeal of the Portugese razed it to ground in 1622 to supply material to one of their fortifications.

284. *A Monograph on Batticola*, Ch. I, Topography.

Purana. The incident of Lanka-burning by Hanuman, as given in the Ramayana is also said to have taken place here.²⁸⁵

From Nagapatnam Guru Nanak reached Trinkomli and therefrom Matiakalam (Batticola).²⁸⁶ The king of Batticola was a Saivite.²⁸⁷ That is why the authors of various *Janamsakhis* have named him Raja Shiv Nabh.²⁸⁸ This means that he was a devotee of Shiva. His real name is not known. He had learnt praises of Guru Nanak because Bhai Mansukh of Lahore, who had met Guru Nanak at Sultanpur along with Bhagirath of Malsian, had gone there in connection with his business and during his conversation²⁸⁹ with the king had told him of Guru Nanak's greatness. The king of Batticola had no doubt heard the name of Guru Nanak but he did not know him by face. So when he learnt that a saint from north India had come, he sent some charming maids to test him. They showed him many of their charms but could not entice the Guru who remained occupied in his own thoughts.²⁹⁰

Then the king himself came and asked for his introduction—whether a *Yogi*²⁹¹ or a *Pandit*? The Guru recited the following hymn in response :

285. *A Monograph on Batticola*, Ch. Ancient History.

286. The *Haqiqat Rah Mukam Raja Shiv Nabh Ki* gives information about the route from Nagapatnam to Sri Lanka which is correct because this was most frequented. For more details, see the author's research paper "Guru Nanak's Visit to Ceylon" in *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference*, Patiala, 1969.

287. In the beginning of the 16th century, seven kings ruled on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. Names of these seven kings are not known, but all seven of them were devotees of Shiva. They ruled over (1) Mulativ, (2) Tirankomli, (3) Batticola, (4) Kotiar, (5) Palgam, (6) Panam, and (7) Jala.

288. The *Vilayatvali*, *Bhai Bala* and *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhis* give the name of Sri Lanka's king as Shiv Nabh.

289. The facts of Bhai Mansukh visiting Sri Lanka in connection with his business before Guru Nanak went there, and the fact of his singing praises of Guru Nanak before the king find mention in the *Vilayatvali* and *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhis*, and not in the *Bala Janamsakhi*. Bhai Mansukh's visit to Sri Lanka and his introducing Guru Nanak seem to be correct.

290. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* refer to the despatch of some charming maids. The *Mani Singh* text gives a detailed account of it whereas the *Bala* text makes no mention of the king testing the Guru. However, putting one to such tests was a common practice those days.

291. The Lankans were familiar with the *yogis*. In the 14th century, Ibn Batuta says that he met *yogis* in Sri Lanka.

The *Yogi* whose praxis in devotion to the immaculate Name lies,
 Not a grain of impurity takes.
 By his side is ever the Beloved Lord,
 His transmigration annulled.
 Lord! what is Thy Name like? How realized?
 Should Thou call me within the Mansion, would I enquire of Thee
 this inner secret (I-Pause)
 The true Brahmin is one whose holy bath is enlightenment of God.
 Whose worship by leaf-petals in singing Divine laudation lies.
 Sole is the Name, in the three worlds is pervasive One Sole Light.
 With the beam of my tongue, with scale of the heart
 The immeasurable name I weigh.
 One is the shop, one the Merchant supreme over all,
 The traders all of one kind.
 The holy Preceptor mystery of both ends has disclosed.
 This by such are realized as in the sole Lord are absorbed,
 And whose self free from doubt abides.
 Such lodging in mind the holy Word, banishing doubt,
 Ever day and night abide God's servant.
 On top is the Tenth chamber, where abides the cherisher of the world.
 There lives the inaccessible Enlightener.
 By the Master's teaching home and the World outside become alike—
 By this teaching is Nanak turned an anchorite.²⁹²

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 992

The King now realized that here was the same holy man Bhai Mansukh had referred to. The king bowed before him and took him to his palace. He kept the Guru with him for some time. Then the Guru took leave of him and went over to a place twelve miles south of Batticola. It was a beautiful and enchanting place. The Guru stayed here for a while. It seems the Guru initiated Changa Bhatra into Sikhism at this place.²⁹³ The place where the Guru stayed is now a part of the town called Kurukalmandap. 'Kurukal' is a Tamil word which literally means 'the Guru's town'. The people of this town told

292. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Bala Janamsakhi* say that this hymn was recited in the presence of Shiv Nabh. *Mani Singh* text says that it was another hymn. Since the former are older than the latter, we have considered them as correct. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* also refers to the recitation of *Pran Sangali*. Guru Arjan had sent, says Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Paira to Sri Lanka to bring the *Pran Sangali*, but after examining it, he did not include it into the scripture. This proves that *Pran Sangali* was not a composition of Guru Nanak.

293. Although there are now no Bhatras in Sri Lanka, but Giani Gian Singh in his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* says that Changa Bhatra became a disciple of Guru Nanak at this place.

the author that a realized soul had come here from north India and that it was about four-and-a-half-hundred years ago. This town came up in memory of his visit.²⁹⁴ Guru Nanak halted here for some time and then travelled ahead.

Meeting the King of Sri Lanka

Guru Nanak left Kurukalmandap for Katargama, the most famous pilgrim centre in Sri Lanka. This latter town is situated on the extreme south-east tip of Sri Lanka. Indian pilgrims had been visiting this place for centuries before Guru Nanak. From Batticola, the pilgrims went to Katargama, travelling on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The Guru reached that famous town travelling through towns of Kalamunai, Tiukoil, Paruvil and Panam.²⁹⁵ This famous pilgrim centre is situated on the bank of the Manak Ganga river. Many traditions are associated with this place which are said to be five thousand years older than Christ. All these are related to Siva's son, Subhramania who is also called Kandakumara or Katargama in Sinhalese.²⁹⁶ According to Giani Gian Singh, Guru Nanak went farther from the temple of Katargama or Kartik Swami to a town called Badula.²⁹⁷ Thence he travelled to the hilly tract of Nura Ahilia, also called Sita Ahilia.²⁹⁸ Passing through Sitavaka, he reached Koti state. At that time king Dharmaparakarmabahu, IX, ruled over Koti.²⁹⁹ His regime spread from Kalaoia in the north up to Valalvi Ganga in the south.³⁰⁰ The King was highly impressed by the Guru.

The state of Koti was predominantly Buddhist by faith,³⁰¹ which is one of the atheistic religions. Guru Nanak not only believed in the existence of God but also felt that God was ever with him. So he preached theism which deeply impressed the King. In

294. The author, with the help of the Archeology Department, Sri Lanka surveyed this entire region in September 1968.

295. Rev. J. Cartman, *Hinduism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1957, p. 120.

296. Paul Wirz, *Katargama* (Tr. Doris Barta Pralle), Colombo, 1966, p. 2.

297. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. I, 4th ed., p. 273.

298. This region is also called Ashoka Ban. According to an old tradition, Emperor Ravana had kept Sita in captivity in this forest.

299. The state of Koti derived its name from the capital, which is situated towards south of Koti, Colombo.

300. *Hinduism in Ceylon*, p. 41.

301. *Ibid.*

Buddhism, the Raja Sangha enjoyed the highest status and was held in esteem by the Buddhists.³⁰² When the Raja Sangha learnt that a saint from north India had arrived and he has made the king his disciple, he tried to create an opportunity to have dialogue with Guru Nanak. Since the Guru's teaching was against casteism and idol-worship, the Brahmins here also sided with the Buddhists. They all began a discourse with the Guru in the presence of the king of Koti.³⁰³ The Guru advised them that only the Name Divine can provide you peace. The Guru recited the following hymn³⁰⁴ :

The Era of Truth (*Satyuga*) utters only truth;
 Those who live on air alone waiver not;
 In the *Treta* Era, the devotees of God meditated hard;
 They observed meditation and penance and sat in trance,
 In the *Dwapar* Era, worship was of four kinds;
 And, in *Kaliyuga*, *kirtan* and the Name Divine are fundamental;
 Then again followed *Satyuga*, *Treta* and *Dwapar*, and the four-fold
 worship
 Earlier these aeons were determined by these, but in *Kaliyuga* only
 the Name is man's support.
 (These verses are not included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*).

Listening to these words, Dharmaprakarma Bahu and others were highly impressed.³⁰⁵ After a brief halt at Koti, Guru Nanak travelled northwards.

Mardana's Hunger

The Guru travelled northwards from Koti and reached Sitavaka which is now a days called Avisvela. It is situated 33 miles (53 kms.)

302. S.W. Karunaratna, *Guru Nanak and Ceylon*. This paper is based on a stone-engraving (No.M.111) preserved in the Museum at Anuradhpura. This paper was read at the international Seminar on 5th September, 1969 at Punjabi University, Patiala. For the text of the paper, see Harbans Singh, ed., *Perspectives on Guru Nanak*.

303. *Ibid*.

304. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. I, fourth edition, p. 277.

305. This episode is based on a stone-engraving discovered by Dr. S. Parnavitana, a former Professor of Archaeology, Colombo, and Dr. S.W. Karunaratna, Assistant Director of Archaeology, preserved in a Museum at Anuradhpura, under No. M.111. It is based on some other engraving. This engraving is in Sanskrit. This belongs to the 15th year of Dharmaprakarmabahu's rule. According to Dr. Karunaratna, King Dharmaprakarma Bahu IX sat on the throne in A.D. 1493. Herein Guru Nanak is mentioned as Nanakacharya. His religion was that of One, Timeless God which rejected casteism and idol-worship.

north-east of present day city of Colombo. The *Haqiqat Rah Mukam* states that there used to be at Sitavaka³⁰⁶ a congregation (*Sangat*) set up by Guru Nanak. The author has surveyed this entire region and has failed to find any Sikh or Sikh shrine here.

The Guru travelled further north from Sitavaka and reached Anuradhpura. This latter town had been the capital of Sri Lanka since ancient times.³⁰⁷ From Anuradhpura, Guru Nanak went further north and reached where now exists the port named Taliminar. Earlier there was a port, named Mainar, near Taliminar which was visited by Ibn-Batuta. He had then met the Muslims residing there.³⁰⁸

The entire stretch from Anuradhpura to Mainar was dry. It had scanty rain and faced shortage of water. Consequently, the area was sparsely populated. Some villages existed on the sea shore and people there followed fishing as their main profession. Most of the population lived on the banks of ponds and lakes. In earlier times, people would collect water during the rains and used that water for their daily needs throughout the year.³⁰⁹ Therefore, habitations were found only on the banks of ponds. Rest of the region was covered with forest which was infested with tigers and jackals.³¹⁰ As the Guru was travelling towards Mainar from Anuradhpur, Mardana felt very thirsty. He told the Guru that he did not feel hungry but was rather thirsty.³¹¹ At that time the Guru sat in the forest. The Guru saw that some jackals were also going towards a particular direction. The

306. In the *Haqiqat Rah Mukam*, Sitavaka is written as *Satvabad*. Mayaduni, a king of this place, had a son, named Raja Singha (1581-1590) who had subdued the entire island of Sri Lanka.

307. *A Concise History of Ceylon*, University of Ceylon, 1961, p. 30.

308. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

309. S.F.D. Salva, *A Regional Geography of Ceylon*, p. 199.

310. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30 and 213. The author has also visited this area of Vavania. In this forest area, jackals and other wild animals can be seen quite often wandering on the roads even now.

311. This episode has been taken from the *Miharban* text. See Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, pp. 206-208. This episode happens prior to the visit to Setbandh Rameshwaram. There is a clear mention of the jackals leading Guru Nanak and Mardana to the water-pond. The sea shore is evident. Although Miharban's version does not make a clear-cut statement about Guru Nanak's visit to Sri Lanka, but there is a mention of a region beyond Rameshwaram with black earth and an alien language which the Guru visited. An analysis of the conditions of Sri Lanka and this region of those days from the geographical stand point reveal that this incident might have taken place somewhere in a village in-between Anuradhpura and Menor.

Guru told Mardana that water might be available in the direction in which the jackals were going because they seemed to be going there to quench their thirst. Thus Guru Nanak and Mardana also followed these jackals. The jackals reached a pond. The Guru and Mardana also drank water there. Thereafter, Mardana asked the Guru that he felt hungry as well. The Guru entered the pond to bathe, but did not come out for quite some time. Mardana kept waiting and was rather perplexed. However, the Guru swam across to the other side of the pond and brought from the adjoining habitation some food for Mardana. Mardana felt quite pleased on seeing the Guru as well as the food. Thus satiating Mardana's hunger, the Guru resumed his journey.

Setbandh Rameshwaram

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana left Mainar in Sri Lanka and boarding either a boat or a passenger ship reached Setbandh. It is now known as Dhanuskodi port. The place is 8-9 miles (13 kms.) away from Rameshwaram. It is said that Rama built a bridge there to invade Sri Lanka. Setbandh is also a pilgrim-centre. The Guru set out from here and reached Rameshwaram. Here stands a gurdwara, *Nanak Udasi Math*, in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit. Earlier it was looked after by *Mahant* Narinder Nath, but the Sikhs of the South have since built a new building and taken over the management. A Sikh, Harcharan Singh by name, from Hoshiarpur used to be the only Sikh member of the local population.

The temple of Rameshwaram is in the north-east of Palmban island. Its interior is made of black stone brought from Sri Lanka.³¹² According to Fergusen, the Rameshwaram temple is a fine specimen of Dravidian art. In the pamphlet published by the temple, the building is said to be very old but the *Imperial Gazetteer* says that major portion of the temple was built in the 16th and the 17th centuries.³¹³ Therefore at the time of Guru Nanak, it could not be such a huge building as it is now. It was quite a small shrine then.

When Guru Nanak approached Rameshwaram, he held discourse with many *yogis* there who came from the Gorakhpanti

312. *A Guide to Ramnath Temple*.

313. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Madras, Southern Districts, 1906, p. 38.

tradition.³¹⁴ When Guru Nanak went inside the temple, the *yogis* asked him that he has been a worshipper of the Formless God : then why does he go to the temple ? In response, the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Maya that is duality, in the mind of world is lodged :
 The world by lust, wrath and pride is being ruined.
 Whom may I name second to the Supreme Being ?
 None such is there.
 In all creation is pervasive that immaculate One. (Pause I)
 Foul thinking, duality-inspired, speaks of a reality other than God.
 Those following this, in transmigration caught, die and away from
 God abide.
 In the earth and sky see I not duality manifest :
 In all humanity is manifest the same Divine Light.
 As the refulgent lamps of sun and moon I view,
 In all is manifest the youthful Beloved Lord.
 The holy Preceptor, granting me enlightenment of the Sole Supreme
 Being,
 In this grace my heart to Him attached.
 By guidance of the Master the Sole immaculate Being have I realized;
 Annulling Duality, by the holy Word have I envisioned Him.
 In all worlds is operative God's sole Ordinance;
 From the One has arisen all creation.
 Two are the paths; of each know the Lord to be the same.
 By the Master's teaching the Divine Ordinance realize.
 All diverse forms and colours by the mind alone are created.
 Saith Nanak : Laud thou the Sole Reality. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 223

Sharing Food with Others

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Rameshwaram and passing through the present day places Ramnandpuram and Trivanmalai reached near Trivandrum. At that time the modern Trivandrum was known as Triu Ananthpuram, a little distance off the sea. The literal meaning of the word was the 'holy town of Sri Ananta.' There was an old temple in the town dedicated to Shri Anantha.³¹⁵ The word Triu

314. Ibn Batuta had met the *yogis* in Jaffana (Sri Lanka). See Ibn Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, London, 1963, p. 255. Thus, the presence of *yogis* here is possible. The *Bala Janamsakhi* gives a detailed account of the discourse between Guru Nanak and the Gorakhpantis. Although no other *Janamsakhi* version refers to Guru Nanak's meeting with the *yogis* at Rameshwaram yet it seems correct.

315. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XXIV, p. 50.

Ananthpuram gradually changed into Trivandrum³¹⁶. Nearby Trivandrum and on its north-west were situated two small towns by the names of Palam and Kottayam.³¹⁷ Guru Nanak came and halted here. There was also an old monastery of the *yogis* here. During the course of his discourse with the *yogis*, Guru Nanak explained the principle of sharing with others, especially the needy whatever you have. The *yogis* gave him a sesame seed and asked if he could share it with others. The Guru took the seed, put it in a small earthen trough and pounded it. Then it was distributed among all the present. The place is now called *Tilganji Sahib*. Here also stands a *gurdwara* wherein Udasi mendicants used to live up to the 1960s.

Salvation of Kauda

From Palam-Kottayam, the Guru travelled northwards and reached near the Annamalai hill in the south of the present Coimbatore district Tamil Nadu. These hills were part of the hills along the western Peninsula. These are called elephant hills also. On the slopes of these hills had been living tribal people called the Kadan.³¹⁸ At the time of Guru Nanak, they used to live in the caves of the hills and lived on the produce of the forests. Like other tribal people, they would annihilate anyone coming from outside. These Kadan tribal people are said to have been called Kauda.³¹⁹

316. Now the old name has again been revived.

(Ed.)

317. Pandit Tara Singh Narotam refers to a place called Puliam Kora. Bhai Kahn Singh, while explaining in his *Mahan Kosh* the Tilganji, also refers to Paliport. However, instead of Paliport it is written as Palipuram. This latter town is in the district of Calicut which is north of Trivandrum. Paliport is a place nearby Trivandrum. In the Post and Telegraphs Directory, Palam, Kottayam and Paliport are referred to as small post offices just near Trivandrum, but these are stated to be three different places. Dr. Ganda Singh had visited this *gurdwara*, and he has told the author that Palam and Kottayam are two small towns in the north-west of Trivandrum and that there is a *gurdwara* between these towns. That is why this place is called Palam-Kottayam.

318. See *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. V, p. 233. Neel Kanth Shastri also writes about the Kadan people: "The occurrence of dwarfish woolly haired individuals with more or less round heads among the Kedars of Parambikulam and Puhaiyan of adjoining Annamali Hills in the extreme south of the Peninsula may be taken to attest the early nerite type." See Neel Kanth Shastri, *History of South India*, 3rd edition, p. 58.

319. During Guru Nanak's times, the cannibal tribes were found at three places. One, the Nagas who lived in the hills of modern Assam. Second, the Gonds who lived

When the Guru approached the Annamalai hills, one Kadan³²⁰ got hold of Mardana and got ready to kill him. The Guru also reached there. As the Kadan saw Guru Nanak's face resplendent with divinity, he felt stunned and bowed at the Guru's feet. The Guru got Mardana released from him and took him along on his journey northwards. It is said that Kadan also became a Sikh of the Guru.

Visiting Bidar

Passing through the Nilgiri hills in the Malabar region, Guru Nanak reached the town of Bidar. The place where now stands the town of Bidar was once a dense Bamboo forest.³²¹ The Kakatia king of Warangal got a temple, dedicated to Mahadeva (Shiva), erected here after clearing the place of bamboos. Around this temple was founded a town in the 13th Century.³²² This town later on came to be called Bidar.

Bidar had been the capital of the Bahmani dynasty. Although the Bahmani regime was on the decline by the time of Guru Nanak. Bidar and its surrounding areas were ruled over by Amir Barid. His reign continued from 1492 to 1538. The tombs of Bahmani kings are on the western and north-eastern sides of Bidar.

Guru Nanak reached the forest on the northern side of Bidar.³²³

in the forests and hills of Orissa. Three, the Kadans who lived in the Nilgiri hills. The word 'Kauda' does not occur in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. Bhai Vir Singh, who edited this work, has put in this word in the chapter-heading. In the original text, the reference appears apparently towards the Nagas because the Nagas live near the Dhanasri valley. Some also call the Gonds of Orissa as Kauda.

320. As we analyse the names occurring in the *Janamsakhi* literature, we learn that many a time only caste-names are given. For example, it is said "Mardana went to the house of an Uppal Khatri." Now Uppal Khatri refers to the caste-name and not the personal name. "A Doda Jat served the Guru." Doda is also the name for a caste. Similarly, the word *Kauda* refers to *Kadan* tribe, and not to an individual name.

Kauda as a demon has appeared in the *Bala* version only, and it comes after the story of Sangladip.

321. Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Khan, *Tazkara-i-Salatin-i-Deccan*, p. 499. Bamboo in Malayalam language is called *bidar*. (Bidar).

322. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. VIII, pp. 169-70.

323. Reference to Bidar occurs only in the *Bala Janamsakhi*. It is also said that Shah Sharaf of this place called on Guru Nanak. However, Shah Saraf is said to have met the Guru at Panipat. Sharaf-ul-din of Panipat. But this needs further investigation. Bu Ali Qalandar, lived prior to Guru Nanak. May be, Shah Sharaf of Bidar had met the Guru.

In this region lived two Muslim holy men Jalal-ud-Din and Syad Yakub Ali.³²⁴ When they learnt of the arrival of a faqir and his attendant, they came to meet the Guru. For some time, the Guru put on with these holy men and recited the following hymn³²⁵:

Muslims of their Shariat code are enamoured,
Which they study and contemplate.
God's true devotees however, are those who to have sight of Him,
On themselves put restraints. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 465

The tombs of both Jalal-ud-Din and Yakub Ali are extant even today. Nearby these tombs is a spring of sweet water which commemorates the Guru's visit. Both the Sikhs and the Hindus call it Nanak Jhira, and the Muslims call it *Chashma-i-Shahdad*. The place was situated within the Hyderabad State. The Sikhs of the area have got its possession after long-drawn endeavours.³²⁶ These days Bidar is the principal town of the district and falls within the state of Karnataka.

Nanded

Nanded a town situated about 117 miles (187 kms.) north of Bidar, had an old fort Nanagiri of the Kakatia kings. The name of the town seems to have been derived from the Nanagiri of the fort.³²⁷

On reaching Nanded, the Guru stayed about three miles (5 kms.) north-east of the town. At the place now stands Gurdwara

324. Maulvi Sufi Ghulam Qasim, *Tazkara-i-Baba Nanak* (Urdu), Amritsar, 1922, pp. 50-57. See also Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. I, 4th edition, p. 257.

325. Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 257.

326. When the Nizam of Hyderabad sent for Sikh forces from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, these Sikh soldiers tried to get the possession of the place, but could not succeed. They founded a new township called *Sikh Pet* about two miles off Bidar. The local people call it *Chik Pet*.

In the 1943 records of the Hyderabad State copies of which are extant in the Gurdwara Nanak Jhira Sahib, the place is called a *gurdwara*. According to a decision of 20 November 1950 a copy of which is also preserved in the *gurdwara*, the place was given to the Sikhs after having been taken from the Muslims. Sahib Singh, one of the *Panj Piare* selected by Guru Gobind Singh, is believed to have been a native of Bidar. See *Itihas Gurdwara Nanak Jhira* (pub : Gurdwara Nanak Jhira) Bidar, p. 10.

327. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 169-78. According to a local tradition, the name Nanded is derived from Nandigan. Even today the town celebrates a day in the year as the oxen's day. A procession of the oxen is taken out. It was earlier called *Nau Nandi Tek*, and all around it were small helmets all of which now

Mal Tikari.³²⁸ Here lived a Muslim holy man, Faqir Sayyid Shah Husain Lakar. The Guru stayed with him for some time. The tomb of this Muslim faqir is on the back of the *gurdwara*. There are two tombs and on their head is a stone on which is engraved the date of the faqir's death viz 1010 H which is equal to 1601 A.D. It shows that he died at a very ripe old age.³²⁹

On the Bank of Narbada

From Nanded, Guru Nanak travelled towards north-west and passing through Devgiri, a very famous town those days and now called Daultabad (in the district of Aurangabad), reached a town which is these days called Baroch situated on the bank of Narbada river where it merges with the Arabian Sea. In the 16th century, Baroch was an important port³³⁰ for trade with the western countries, Roads from all directions lead to this place. At the time of Guru Nanak, the Rajput kings of Gujrat maintained close relations with the Hindu rajas of Devgiri.³³¹ Therefore, the means of transportation between Gujrat and Devgiri are quite common even today.

Baroch is a very ancient town. The Greeks have written it as Barigaza.³³² According to the *Matsya Puran*, it was here that Vaman had sought two and a half *karam* (about four square yards) land from King Bal. Guru Nanak occupied a place on the bank of Narbada which is now quite close to the Baroch railway station and which is called *Nanakwari* or *Nanak-wadi*. When the Guru stayed here, a *Sannyasin* also came and sat near him.

After a short while, she sought the Guru's permission and asked

➤ form part of Nanded. The place where now stands Gurdwara Sangar Sahib was earlier the village Sidh Nath Puri or Brahmpuri. Nearby it was Wazirabad. It was so named because it happened to be the *jagir* of a wazir (minister). The mansion of this minister stood on the site where now stands Gurdwara Mal Tikari Sahib (Statement of Abdul Samad Khan *Mamuldar*, Takhat Sachkhand Sahib, Nanded).

328. *Hazuri Didare* (pub. Sant Baba Harnam Singh of Nanded), p. 270.

329. Many Sikhs in Nanded declare this Muslim faqir a contemporary of Guru Hargobind which is incorrect because he died during the pontificate of Guru Arjan. This holy man being a contemporary of Guru Nanak seems more probable. Maybe, he was not very old at the time of Guru Nanak's visit.

330. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. IX, p. 20.

331. Kishori Sharan Lal, *History of the Khiljis*, Bombay, 1967, pp. 233-35.

332. Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, p. 275.

how can mind merge with God whilst being away from it. In reply, the Guru recited the following hymn :³³³

While the mind is not subdued, achievement of the objective comes
not;
The mind is in the power of minions of evil thinking and duality.
As the Master's teaching by the mind is absorbed,
To the Creator is it united.
God, who is without attributes Himself to man's good qualities is
responsive :
This after banishing the ego is realized. (Pause I)
The mind, misguided, in thoughts of evil is involved.
The mind, deluded, with sin is burdened.
With realization is the mind to the sole Supreme Being united.
The mind deluded into *Maya*-abode enters;
In lust involved, in poise is it not fixed.
Man ! on the Lord meditate; to your tongue impart *taste of this*.
By excessive anxiety for elephants, steeds, gold, progeny and
woman.
Does man lose the bout,
In this with false counters he is playing.
In hoarding wealth comes evil-thinking,
And pleasure and pain at our doorstep keep standing.
By meditation on the Lord comes to the heart spontaneous joy.
Should He show grace, with the Preceptor He grants union.
With good qualities garnered, are evils in the holy Word consumed;
And man by the Master's guidance boon of the Name acquires.
Without *devotion* to the name is one's lodgement solely in suffering.
The thoughtless egoist's mind in *Maya* is fixed.
By writ of primal Time comes realization by the Master's guidance.
The restless mind constantly runs about and from running ceases
never.
The holy and the pure to impurity *of mind* are averse.
Saith Nanak : The God-directed ever the Divine laudation chant.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 222

After listening to the hymn, he paid obeisance to the Guru. The Guru stayed at Baroch for some days. *Nanak-wadi* is one of the memorials of Guru Nanak's visit here.³³⁴ In the 18th century when the British came to occupy the area, a *jagir* of Rs.75/- per annum was given in the name of the *gurdwara* which still continues. The lease-

333. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Sri Guru Nanak*, p. 291 (App. 128-29).

334. Tara Singh Narotam, *Gur Tirath Sangrah*, No. 30.

deed of the *gurdwara* is with a trustee.³³⁵ Narbada Das was a known *mahant* of this shrine. His tomb exists within the *gurdwara* limits.

Guru Nanak put up here for some time and then moved ahead.

Girnar Hills (Sorath *Desh*)

During the times of Guru Nanak boats and ships started from Baroch towards all directions. Travelling by boat was quite common along the sea coast.³³⁶ Guru Nanak boarded a boat from Baroch and reached Parbhas which was then a port³³⁷ and is nearby the modern-day Vairaval. Near Parbhas ferry was the famous Somnath temple which was demolished by Mahmood in the beginning of the 12th century and Kumar Pala had got it reconstructed.³³⁸ The Guru reached the Girnar hill, fifty miles (80 kms.) off the Somnath temple. This hill is 10 miles (16 kms.) away from Junagarh.³³⁹ The earlier name for Junagarh was Soratha : Saurashtra is the other name of Soratha. Although during the British rule Rajkot and many other princely states formed part of the Saurashtra region yet only the Nawab of Junagarh was called Sorath Sarkar (His Highness of Sorath). Thus, the Junagarh region was the real Soratha country.³⁴⁰ When Guru Nanak reached there, Muzaffar II (1511-26) ruled over the Soratha country.³⁴¹ On reaching there Guru Nanak told Mardana that it was the Sorath country and that it was here that the lovers named Soratha and Bija were born. The Soratha *raga* seems charming only if it leads to union with God. Then he asked Mardana to play Soratha *raga* on his rebeck and himself sang the following hymn³⁴² :

335. Statement by trustee (of Gurdwara Nanak-Wadi) Shri Bachu Bhai Inamdar Advocate, Baroch (Gujrat).

336. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. IX, p. 26.

337. The Vairaval port is 300 year old. At the time of Guru Nanak, Parbhas ferry was the port which is 3 miles (5 kms.) of Vairaval. Nearby Somnath, Parbhas was the oldest town.

338. Kishori Sharan Lal, *History of the Khiljis*, pp. 67-68.

339. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XII, p. 247.

340. Sorath is a very old name. The famous Greek writer Straibo (60 B.C.) has written it as Horat. Magusathnis states Somnath to be in Horat region. Similarly, ancient Jaina texts also call Saurashtra as Sorath. For details, See Shambu Prasad Har Prasad Desai, *Saurashtrano Itihas* (Gujrati), 2nd edition, 1969, pp. 3 and 4. The author is indebted to Desai for his help in rendering this from Gujrati into English.

341. Sri Shambu Prasad Har Prasad Desai, *Saurashtrano Itihas*, p. 551.

342. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* says that this hymn was uttered by Guru Nanak in the Soratha country. See *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, pp. 356-57 (App. 136-37). ◀

Sorath ever shall have lovely aspect, should the holy Eternal in the
singers' mind be borne;
 Should the teeth with *biting food* immorally *obtained* be not soiled;
 And in the mind and on the tongue be borne *name* of the Eternal.
 In the hereafter and here
 Should she abide in fear of *God*,
 And by service of the holy Preceptor be freed of doubt.
 Should union with the Lord come about after discarding the worldly
 vesture,
 Even thus must she have joy with Him.
 Ever with the Name should she bedecked,
 With her mind totally free from impurity.
 Her tormenting male relations in pain have died—
 Why of the mother-in-law should she have fear ?
 Saith Nanak : Should the woman of the Beloved be favoured,
 The jewel of *good fortune* on her forehead will she bear,
 And all *existence* to her bear the aspect of truth.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 642

At the time of Guru Nanak, the Girnar³⁴³ hill near Junagarh
 was a famous centre of the *yogis* of the Gorakh Nath sect. According
 to a tradition current among the *yogis*, Dattatreya had been the
 preceptor of Machhandar Nath. He gave initiation to the latter and
 the latter in turn to Gorakh. The seat of Dattatreya was on one of
 the highest peaks of the Girnar mountain.³⁴⁴ This mountain has five
 peaks now named Amba Mata, Gorakh Nath, Ogad Sikhar, Guru
 Dattatreya and *Kalika*. There were some Jaina shrines also on way
 to these peaks. The existing temple of Amba Mata had in fact been
 a Jaina shrine.³⁴⁵ In the 12th century, the Chief of Gujrat had in
 A.D. 1113 spent the entire state exchequer on Girnar and on
 constructing the Jaina shrines.³⁴⁶ In the *Skand Puran*, the description
 of Girnar does not include any reference to the Gorakh Nath Peak.
 As per the *Imperial Gazetteer*, the Aghoris and other *sadhhus* who ate
 human flesh used to live on the *Kalika* peak uptill recent times. They
 observed no sanctity in their dietary habits and they would even eat

➤ Such a reference is not found in any of the other *Janamsakhis*. However, the
 tradition of Guru Nanak visiting the Soratha country still persists in Junagarh.

343. The earlier name for Girnar was Ujjainata or Girwar.

344. *Saurashtrano Itihas*, op. cit., p. 259.

345. Statement of the author of the *Saurashtrano Itihas*. According to him, sometimes
 the priests of temples on the Girnar would even sell these temples or would discard
 the old place in favour of a new one, where they would erect a new temple.

346. Sri Shambu Prasad Har Prasad Desai, *Saurashtrano Itihas*, p. 259.

the human flesh.³⁴⁷ It seems that holy men of different traditions had been living on the Girnar since ancient times. These days three *kunds* of Girnar are famous—*Gorakhmukhi Kund*, *Hanuman Dhara* and *Karmandal Kund*. As their names suggest, the first two of these could be attributed to holy men of two different traditions. About the last named, two traditions are current among the people. One, there was shortage of water near the Dattatreya peak. Once some *sadhus* asked for water and a holy man threw at them his water-filled bowl (*karmandal*) and where this *karmandal* fell down that became the *Karmandal Kund*. Secondly, some hold the view that the shape of this *Kund* is like that of a *karmandal* and that is why it is called the *Karmandal Kund*. Whatever might be the reason, this *Kund* does not seem very old because there is no mention of this *Kund* in the Parbhas chapter of the *Skand Puran* although we find therein a detailed description of the Girnar hills.³⁴⁸

There is no old *gurudwara* in the memory of Guru Nanak extant in Junagarh. It is said that there used to be a Nanak Shahi Gurdwara in Junagarh where now stands the Durga Temple (Dharagarh Gate) behind the Garden of the Naths. Here used to live the saints of the *Suthra Shahi* order of Sikhism.³⁴⁹ Now these *Suthra Shahi* saints have moved out after selling the place to a householder. After spending some time at the Girnar mountain, Guru Nanak travelled ahead northwards.

Ujjain

From Girnar Hills in Junagarh Guru Nanak and Mardana first travelled northwards and then turned eastward and after passing through Ahmedabad they reached Ujjain. The traders visited Ahmedabad and Ujjain quite often on the coast of western sea. Both these towns were big centres of trade.³⁵⁰

347. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XII, pp. 247-48.

348. See the *Skand Puran's* Gujrati translation by Gorabai Ram Ji. This contains "Girnar Mahatam" (Importance of Girnar).

349. A statement by Balak Das Udasi of Junagarh.

350. Ahmedabad got this name not long ago. Its earlier name was Ashawal. It was a big centre of trade on the western coast. See *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. V, p. 102. Ujjain was also well connected with trade routes leading to all sides. See *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XXIV, p. 113.

The earlier name for Ujjain was Avantipura. It was situated on the bank of Avanti river, now known as Sapra river. Avantipura was a famous town of the Avanti country of olden times. Bikramajit, after whom is named the Indian calendar still in vogue in northern India was the king of Ujjain. His brother, Bharthari Hari, had renounced home to become an ascetic. Bharthari Hari's cave in Ujjain is famous to date. The temple of *Maha Kal* here was considered the famous centre of pilgrimage for the Hindus. Slave King Iltutmash looted this town and temple in 1235 A.D. In the fifteenth century a wall was constructed around the city for its defence. It was around this time that Guru Nanak visited Ujjain. The wall was in existence then. The old city of Ujjain was built around the temple of *Maha Kal*. Now the old city as well as the wall exist no more, and the city has rehabilitated itself on a new site.

At the time of Guru Nanak's visit, the cave of Bharthari Hari was on the bank of the Sapra outside the town. The Muslims erected a mosque near the cave before which stood a tamarind tree. Guru Nanak went and sat near the tree.³⁵¹ Hindu pilgrims of all traditions came to pay obeisance at the cave of Barathari Hari. Near this place, resided a Bharthari *Yogi*. When he saw Guru Nanak and Mardana performing *Kirtan* (singing hymns), he was highly impressed. He came to them and asked as to how many of the *yogis* coming over here would achieve salvation. In response to this question the Guru recited the following hymn³⁵² :

One is pure only when acting by guidance of the true self;
 The uninitiated know not the true secret of liberation.
 That yogi alone the true praxis has contemplated,
 Who subduing the five sources of evil, in heart cherishes truth.
 (Pause I)
 Such alone the reality of yoga-praxis realize,
 As have within them the Divine Essence.
 To a true yogi are heat of the sun and cool atmosphere of the moon
 and home and forest alike;
 Also to Him is action and devotion of the same order of performance.
 The sole Name of God is charity—
 Ever awake in enlightenment, meditation, yoga-praxis and truth.
 In fear of God absorbed, from the self he strays not;
 Who may evaluate him in his absorption ?

351. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, p. 300 (app. 129).

352. *Ibid.*

Whomsoever the Lord to Himself unites, and his illusion lifts,
 By grace of the Master the supreme state attains.
 The holy action of *such a yogi* in service of the Master,
 Contemplation of the Word and subduing egoism, lies.
 Saith Nanak : The essence of utterance of God's Name, austerity,
 sacred recitation of scriptures
 In this lies, that in the Lord, transcending our knowing, has he faith.
 —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 223

Listening to this; many misgivings in the mind of Bharthari *yogi* got cleared. He discussed with Guru Nanak several other matters and thus got enlightened about the significance of *Sabda* (Name). One day Bharthari *yogi* was full of humility as he asked Guru Nanak : "You do not take the ordinary food. We live among the trees and the woods. What sort of food should be placed before you which might please yourself. You do not seek anything obtained by exercise of supernatural or magical powers. We are afraid that we have not been able to serve you well." On hearing this the Guru recited the following hymn³⁵³ :

Forgiveness have I grasped; and taken vow of noble conduct and contentment.
 Thereby afflicts me no malady nor suffering from yama;
 Thus have we been liberated and merged into the Lord without form or feature.
 What has the *yogi* to fear?
 In all that is without, including trees and plants, is He pervasive.
 (Pause I)
 The *yogi*, from fear emancipated, on the Lord without fear meditates;
 Awake ever, in truth is he absorbed.
 To my mind is such a *yogi* pleasing.
 The snare of death in the flame of enlightenment he burns:
 Old age, the path of death and pride he annuls;
 Liberated himself, to his ancestors too he brings liberation.
 The true *yogi* is one who to the holy Preceptor is devoted;
 In fear of God immersed, fearless he becomes;
 As the Lord that he serves, he becomes.
 The Name is emancipator from fear, and bringer of the immaculate state.
 Of the helpless is it cherisher; to it may I be a sacrifice!
 By chanting Divine laudation is one not again into the birth mould cast.

353. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, p. 300 (app. 129).

Let the yoga-practitioner realize one Supreme Being within and without.
 By the Master's teaching should he himself realize.
 By power of the holy Word shall he be marked with bliss at the Divine Portal.
 Whoever by the holy Word to the world dies, in the Divine Essence abides;
 His transmigration annulled, his desire ended,
 By *blessing* of the Master's Word is illumined lotus of his heart.
 Whomsoever *in the world* we view, is by hope and despair filled :
 By lust and wrath moved, for poison *of the world* hungry and thirsty.
 Saith Nanak : Rare are such as truly the world have renounced.

—Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 223-24

On listening to this hymn, Bharthari bowed before the Guru. Then followed another spiritual discourse. Bharthari asked him what was his way of knowledge. Which bathing did he attach importance to? Whom did he remember? In reply, the Guru uttered the following hymn³⁵⁴ :

The seeker descending into the Pool difficult of access must take there holy bath;
 Refraining from idle chatter, in Divine laudation must he engage;
 As water in the sky, in the cosmic silence should he be absorbed,
 And stirring the equable state, the supreme elixir should obtain.
 My heart ! listen to this way of realization :
 The Lord, pervasive everywhere, all space has propped up. (I Pause)
 Death torments not one who observes discipline of truth :
 Such a one in the Master's Word his wrath should consume.
 Settled in the seat of illumination, should he enter the state of absorption.
 Thus, touching the Divine philosopher's stone, the supreme state shall he attain.
 To obtain purity of self should he churn out truth;
 In the brimful pool of holy company, should he wash his mind free of impurity;
 Thus shall he become as that to which he is attached.
 To the Divine will should he be resigned.
 In the cooling snow of the Preceptor's *teaching* should he assuage his passion's fire;
 Service and absorption in God should his ashes be to smear his body;
 Be his earrings entering the house of poise,
 And of the immaculate Word should he blow the horn.

354. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, pp. 306-10.

Illumination within shall his supreme elixir be;
 The Master's teaching his bathing at holy spots;
 His temple, worship of the Lord abiding within the self,
 Who the light of the self to the Divine light unites.
 In joy in God drenched, his mind to sole love of the Lord attached;
 One of the elect, in the Divine monarch is he absorbed;
 In obedience to the Lord's will all his doing—
 The Lord indescribable and inaccessible.
The God-directed are like the lotus, that rising from the water, yet keeps
 from it far;
 In the water yet is its light pervasive.
 Whom shall I call near, whom *from the Lord far*?
 Praise of the Repository of Merit I chant, who is ever present.
 Within and without is none other than the Lord :
 All happens as be His pleasure.
 Listen, Bharthari ! Nanak states this after pondering :
 The Name immaculate is my sole support.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 411

Listening to this, Bharthari again bowed. Guru Nanak put up with Bharthari for some time and then set out toward north.

Mathura

From Ujjain Guru Nanak and Mardana travelled through Chitaur and Ajmer to reach Mathura. Near Ajmer, there is an old *gurdwara* of Guru Nanak on the bank of Pushkar lake. Mathura was an ancient town. The famous Greek writer Ptolemy has written it as Mathaura and Arian and Pliny call it Mithaura. At the time of Hieun Tsang's visit it was a Buddhist pilgrim centre and he had seen here 2000 Buddhist *bhikshus* in twenty monasteries.³⁵⁵ During the Muslim rule Mathura was a Vaishnav centre and the region on its west was known as *Brij* land because here were situated the birth-place and many other places associated with the memory of Lord Krishna. Being close to Delhi, it used to bear the brunt of Muslim antipathy. Mahmood of Ghazni was the first to demolish temples of Mathura. Then Emperor Sikandar Lodhi (1488-1517) devastated several of the temples at Mathura.³⁵⁶

In Mathura, Guru Nanak put up in the temple of Keshav

355. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XXII, p. 64.

356. *Muttra District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 190.

Deva.³⁵⁷ This temple was situated in a small building. During the reign of Jahangir a big temple of Keshav Deva was erected. It was demolished in 1669 under orders of Emperor Aurangzeb.³⁵⁸ When Guru Nanak sat in the temple, many devotees came to him. During the course of their dialogue, the devotees asked him as to which service rendered by him has enabled him to identify with Almighty Lord. In reply the Guru recited this hymn³⁵⁹ :

Seeking union by poise alone is truly approved —
 Such nevermore are subjected to death or transmigration.
 In the Lord is absorbed His servant; in the servant is the Lord Himself.
 Wherever I took, none other I behold.
 By the Master's *guidance* are attained devotion and poise :
 Without the Master's *guidance* is one subjected to death and
 transmigration. (I Pause)
 Adopt the preceptor who *in the mind* confirms truth;
 Inspires utterance of the unutterable and by the holy Word brings
 about union.
 No other pursuit engages God's devotees :
 The holy Lord and Truth to such a one are dear.
 The mind in his body abides; in the mind *abides* the holy Eternal—
 To the Eternal united, in Him is he absorbed.
 The devotee at the Lord's fee falls,
 With whom the Master, perfectly-endowed, finds union and to it leads
 others.
 Himself He grants the vision, Himself the Beholder.
 By *batha* is the Lord not propitiated, nor by numerous sectarian garbs.
 The mind in devotion to the Lord is absorbed,
 Who fashioning vessels, into them poured *amrita*.
 Those studying much stray and chastisement receive.
 Too much cleverness only brings on transmigration.
 The servant of God by the Master's guidance in the Lord is absorbed;
 Contemplating the Name, consumes sustenance of His fear.
 Those worshipping stones and residing at bathing spots and in forests;
 Wandering, turning away from the world—
 Still is their mind impure : how may it acquire purity ?
 Whoever to Truth is united, alone obtains honour.
 Beloved Lord ! in your grace to a Preceptor unite me,
 Who with noble conduct and contemplation should be endowed,
 Who since primal time should bear a mind poised and restful,

357. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, p. 360 (App. 138-39).

358. *Muttra District Gazetteer*, pp. 294-95.

359. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, pp. 362-64 (App. 139).

And in the twinkling of his lotus eye save millions.
 Lord ! to whom shall we relate Thy laudation ?
 No other than Thy self exists.
 Keep us *obedient* to Thy will as may please Thee.
 May Nanak in spontaneous poise chant *Thy* praise.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 686

While the Guru was in Mathura, some Vaishnavite natives of Mathura came to him. After a while they asked him : “What is your *panth* (religious path) ? What is your code of conduct ? What are your teachings ?” Guru Nanak answered these questions by uttering the following hymn ³⁶⁰ :

Of the Lord am I a handmaid.
 Feet of the Lord, life of the universe have I grasped,
 And my egoism have destroyed, ended. (I-Pause)
 The Supreme Lord, perfection incarnate, supreme effulgence,
 Beloved of my life;
 The Divine charmer, my heart has charmed—
 By contemplation of the holy Word realized.
 The low egoist, of understanding shallow and foul,
 Racked with agony is his mind and body.
 After entering into love for the Lord, full of delights,
 By contemplation the Lord, is my mind in poise.
 Since discarding egoism am I grown unattached,
 And pure realization in my self is absorbed.
 As the mind in faith for the immaculate, uncreated Lord is fixed,
 Restraints of convention have I discarded.
 Beloved, prop of life; in the past or future none is like you.
The self female dyed in the Name Divine is of eternally blessed
 matrimony :
 Saith Nanak, the Lord is her spouse. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1197

When these Vaishnavites listened to this hymn, they bowed before the Guru. He stayed for some more days in Mathura and went further north.

Delhi

Travelling northwards from Mathura, Guru Nanak reached Delhi. He put up at an isolated place outside the town on the bank of river Yamuna. The place was called *Majnu-ka-tilla*.³⁶¹ Here used to dwell

360. Mihaarban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak*, pp. 368-70 (App. 139).

361. Kahn Singh, *Gurshabd Ratnakar*, 942, Patiala, 1974.

a holy man named Majnu. He would ever meditate on God. This raised mound was then known by his name.

When Guru Nanak was putting up in Delhi, the liberal and charitable temper of Sikandar Lodhi was the talk of the town. The Muslim *faqirs* and *darweshes* sang his praises. One day some *faqirs* asked the Guru that giving charity to the poor is considered noble in all religions, but if a king gives this charity, does he or does he not deserve liberation? Guru Nanak had seen the ruins of temples in Mathura demolished by Sikandar Lodi. So he replied: "Those who are blind of mind, are prejudiced and commit cruelties on populace: their charity is like putting up a *bandh* of mud before the sea/war. In explanation of his idea, the Guru sang the following hymn³⁶²:

In performing thoughtless acts the mind grows blind;
Blindness of mind makes blind the physical faculties.
How may mud secure a bank when even stone embankments give
way?
As breaks the embankment,
Neither boat nor raft avails in the immeasurable depth.
Saith Nanak: Bereft of succour of the holy Name,
Are numerous *bands* sunk. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1287

Now the holy men realized that charity is fruitful only when complemented by good and noble conduct. They bowed before the Guru. Guru Nanak stayed there for some days and then left towards north-west.

Panipat

Panipat was situated in north-west of Delhi on a *kacha* road which was got laid by Sher Shah Suri after Guru Nanak's time. Ever since the sixteenth century, the destiny of Delhi's throne was decided by battles fought at Panipat on this road. Guru Nanak and Mardana reached Panipat from Delhi. Panipat is now a district headquarter of Haryana state. There had been a famous Muslim holy man in Panipat by the name of Bu Ali Qalandar Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din who was popularly known as Shah Sharaf. He passed away in A.D. 1325.³⁶³ His tomb is still extant in Panipat. When Guru Nanak

362. This episode is based on *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p. 114 (App. 99).

363. Maulana Syad Muhammad, *Bazurgan-i-Panipat*, Delhi, 1963, p. 135.

reached the town, this tomb was a big centre of the Sufis.³⁶⁴ At that time Shaikh Idul Kabir was the head of this spiritual seat who was known for his spiritual attainments. He breathed his last in A.D. 1540. He had several names.³⁶⁵ Shaikh Tahir also appears to be one of his several names.³⁶⁶ Tahir is an Arabic word which implies pious, holy. The *Janamsakhi* literature refers to him as Shaikh Tatihar. Guru Nanak and Mardana put up outside the town. One of the disciples of Shaikh Tahir came there to fetch water. On reaching there he saw that a holy man and a rebeck-player sat there and sang Divine hymns. The disciple was highly impressed by these hymns and told about this to his preceptor. He also felt anxious to know about the holy man who sang such soulful songs. Thus, both the preceptor and his disciple came to the Guru and sat before him. After some time they asked Guru Nanak as to how does a clear-hearted holy man look like and how does he behave? In reply, Guru Nanak is stated to have recited a verse to explain the real qualities of a holy man. This hymn is not found in *Guru Granth Sahib*.³⁶⁷

Sultanpur

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Panipat and passing through Thanesar reached Takhtupura, which now falls under Nihal Singh Wala police station in Moga district. There stands a *gurdwara* in the memory of the Guru's visit : it is believed to be a historical shrine.³⁶⁸ From Takhtupura, he crossed the Sutlej and reached Sultanpur.

On reaching Sultanpur, Guru Nanak met his sister, Nanaki.³⁶⁹ However, he was free from the bonds of attachment. A holy man

364. Maulana Syad Muhammad, *Bazurgan-i-Panipat*, Delhi, 1963, pp. 144-169.

365. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

366. In the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, he has been mentioned as Shaikh Tatihar, i.e. Shaikh Tahir. Tatihar has been another form of Tahar.

367. This episode is based only on *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. See Sakhi No.14. *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions do not refer to it. *Bala* version puts Guru Nanak's dialogue (*goshti*) with Shah Sharaf and Wali Qandhari at Kabul. However, the tomb of Shah Sharaf is in Panipat. Therefore this episode can be said to have taken place at Panipat.

368. *Ripudaman Prakash*, Part I, 1919, Gurdwara No. 38 and Nanaksar No. 7. See also Sultanpur in *Mahan Kosh*.

369. The *Bala Janamsakhi* refers to Guru Nanak meeting his sister at Sultanpur. This reference is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*.

met the Guru at Sultanpur and asked : "You have realized God, but we fail to know anything of Him. How great He is and what He looks like ?" In response to this question, the Guru uttered the following hymn³⁷⁰ :

Hard it is to discourse on God, hard listening to it;
By words alone is He not realized.
Some discourse of Him through words day and night, in various
postures.
Should He have form, world it be visible :
Visible neither His form nor entity.
All causes by the Creator are made—
All creatures good and bad by Him created.
Saith Nanak : Hard it is to discourse of Him—
By words not realized. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1239

On hearing this *sloka*, the holy man paid obeisance and departed. The Guru spent some time at Sultanpur and then started for Talwandi.

The Zamindars of Patti

From Sultanpur Guru Nanak travelled further north-west and reached Patti, (now in Amritsar district). A little ahead of Sultanpur, he crossed the Beas from where Patti was ten miles (16 kms.) off north-west. Patti, or China Patti was an ancient town where Heun Tsang had stayed in the seventh century. However, in Guru Nanak's time, it was a town believed to have been founded by Haibat Khan Sherwani who was a well-known courtier of Sikandar Lodhi. That is why the town was also called Patti Haibat Khan.³⁷¹

When Guru Nanak passed by Patti, he saw some peasants ploughing the land. He stayed with them in the fields for some time.

370. This episode is found on pp. 383-84 of the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. This text also refers to the Guru's three meetings with Daulat Khan at Sultanpur. These episodes contain exposition of three hymns. However, no other *Janamsakhi* confirms the Guru's meeting with Daulat Khan after his return from the travels. It is just possible that Daulat Khan might have shifted his residence to Lahore as Governor of Punjab while the Guru was away on his divine mission "to save the mankind" as Bhai Gurdas puts it.

371. Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, Varanasi, 1963, p. 171. Abul Fazal says that the town was founded by Jauhar who was a special officer of Humayun. It is possible that during Humayun's regime, the town might have been a *jagir* of Jauhar who could have got wells dug there.

The owner of the fields came to the Guru and started a dialogue with him. During the course of conversation, the Guru asked him what will be the fruit of farming he did and got done. The man in his egoity said that with this he would offer food to saints like the Guru, feed the family and carry on give and take with the relatives. Thus, farming is the principal source of our livelihood. The Guru listened to his answer attentively and then asked as to what he did for the salvation of soul. That is a different kind of farming which makes our soul flourish. The *zamindar* and peasants then requested the Guru to tell them about that farming also. The Guru uttered the following hymn³⁷² :

Make thy body the soil; put therein the seed of good deeds;
 With the *Name* Divine irrigate it.
 Let thy mind be the cultivator, and raise crop of God's devotion :
 Thus shalt thou obtain the state of *nirvana*.
 Thoughtless man ! why take pride in worldly pelf ?
 Father, progeny, wife, mother—none in the end shall succour thee.
 (Pause I)
 Uproot malignant weeds of evil inclinations and thoughts—
 Discarding these, the self-contemplate.
 As this cultivation with prayer, austerity and self-control thou shalt
 guard,
 The lotus shall bloom and therefrom ooze nectar.
 He that during the twenty-seven phases of the noon,
 Each day garners devotion;
 In the three period of life keeps death in mind;
 In the ten scriptures and eighteen Puranas seeks the Creator without
 limit—
 Saith Nanak—thus by the sole Lord
 Shall he be taken across. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 23

The peasants bowed before the Guru and touched his feet. The Guru left Patti and travelled westwards.

Talwandi

From Patti Guru Nanak travelled through the town of Khalra, Ghawindi and reached Talwandi. There are shrines erected in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit in Khalra and Ghawindi.³⁷³

372. See *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Part II, pp.182-83.

373. See Tara Singh Narotam, *Gur Tirath Sangrah*, Gurdwara 43 and 44.

Guru Nanak halted outside Talwandi as he returned there after 12-year-long travels aimed at preaching the Name Divine.³⁷⁴ Mardana had all along remained with him. He had a great desire to meet his kin. So on reaching Talwandi he sought the Guru's permission and went into the town to meet his kin. So on reaching Talwandi he sought the Guru's permission and went into the town to meet his kin. The news spread throughout the village that Mardana *dum* who used to roam with Nanak had come back home. Mardana first visited his house and then called on Guru Nanak's mother. She asked him about her son's whereabouts, but Mardana made no answer because the Guru had desired that he must not tell anybody about his arrival.³⁷⁵ As Mardana made haste to go back, she understood everything. She followed Mardana and reached where Guru Nanak sat. She had seen her son after twelve years, and her eyes overflowed with tears. The Guru got up and touched the feet of his mother. She said, "I am proud of thee, my son. I hail thy name. You showed me your face, and I am highly pleased."³⁷⁶ The Guru's father also came over there. The parents greatly emphasized that he should visit home, but he did not agree. He spent some time nearby Talwandi and then, taking Mardana along, travelled on.

Duni Chand

Guru Nanak and Mardana reached Lahore from Talwandi and stayed outside the town near the New Badami Bagh.³⁷⁷ At the time of Guru Nanak, there lived a *Karori* by the name of Duni Chand. In the Mughal regime a revenue officer who collected a crore of *dam* for the royal treasure was given the title of *Karori*³⁷⁸ : the value of

374. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* refers to his return to Talwandi after 12 years. The *Mani Singh* version says that Guru asked his parents, "I have travelled in two directions, and two directions still remain to be covered." The two directions covered are east and south. The *Miharban* text also combines the odyssey towards east and west as one.

375. This incident has been related as such in the *Vilayatvali* and the *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*. The *Bala* and the *Miharban* versions do not refer to it. However, it seems quite natural for Mardana to visit his house on their return to Talwandi after the such a long journey in far off lands.

376. This unique narration of mother's affection for son is from the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*.

377. *Duni Chand Nistara*, Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, November 1928.

378. Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, p. 1.

a *dam* was quite less than a rupee. Duni Chand Karori was a revenue officer of the area adjoining Lahore. He was Khatri by caste and resided at Lahore in *Chuhatta Bazar* Jawahar Mal. It is said that Jawahar Mal was also one of his ancestors and the bazar was named after him. The bazar is known by this very name till today. There is also a *gurdwara* in the memory of Guru Nanak.³⁷⁹

In olden times the rich used to tie small pieces of beautiful cloth on the outer door of the house. One such piece indicated one Lakh. They say that seven such pieces were tied at the door of Duni Chand's house which implied that Duni Chand possessed seven lakh.³⁸⁰ He was very proud of his wealth. One day as he came to the town he happened to meet the Guru. The latter's divine hymn attracted him. During the course of their conversation, the Guru smelt egocentricity in Duni Chand. The Guru asked him to take one needle from him which he might ask for in the life after death. He took the needle home and making it over to his wife told her everything that transpired between him and Guru Nanak. Duni Chand's wife impressed upon him that nothing goes with man after his death. He came back to the Guru, gave back the needle and said that he would not be able to take it along after death. The Guru further asked him as to how he will take along all the wealth that he had been collecting. The Guru advised him : "Only Name, recitation, altruism and noble deeds go along after one's death." Duni Chand was impressed by the Guru's teaching and fell at his feet.

One day Duni Chand invited Guru Nanak to his house; it was the day of *shradh* of Duni Chand's father. The Guru went there and advised him that one should serve his parents when they were alive. With his spiritual strength, he convinced Duni Chand that his father's soul will remain hungry inspite of his feeding any number of Brahmins.³⁸¹ Duni Chand fell on the Guru's feet and became his disciple.³⁸²

379. *Ripudaman Prakash*, Part I, 1919, Gurdwara No. 20.

380. This is based on *Sakhi* No.37 in the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*. This incident is not found in any other version. Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* refers to Duni Chand as belonging to Sialkot.

381. The *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* mentions a miracle wherein the Guru showed him his father in the form of a tiger and then fed him. This only implies that the Guru showed him that his father's soul is hungry although he might perform any number of *shradhs*; this would in no way help his father.

382. See *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*, *Sakhi* No. 34.

Jwalaji

From Lahore Guru Nanak came to Vairawal, now in Amritsar district. Crossing the Goindwal ford, Guru Nanak passed through the present Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur districts. Travelling further north-west, he crossed the Sutlej and reached the Ropar hills and sat in a forest on the eastern bank of the river. This place was within the Kahlur hill state, now called Bilaspur. The capital of the Rajput king of Kahlur was the fort, Kot Kahlur, on the top of Nainadevi hill.³⁸³ This hill-top was quite close to the place where the Guru sat. This place is 14 miles (22.4 kms.) north of Ropar and six miles (9.6 kms.) south of present Anandpur Sahib.

During the time of Guru Nanak a Muslim holy man, Faqir Buddhan Shah lived on this side of Sutlej. He had some goats. Attracted by the divine notes of the hymns of Guru Nanak he took the Guru to his hut. The Guru stayed with him for some time and Buddhan Shah served the Guru and Mardana with goat milk.³⁸⁴ At the place then sanctified by Guru Nanak, Guru Hargobind later on founded the town of Kiratpur.³⁸⁵ The place of Buddhan Shah is half a mile south of Kiratpur and quite close to the *darbar* of Baba Gurditta. Close by is the tomb of Buddhan Shah. The place where the Guru had dialogue with Buddhan Shah is commemorated by the Gurdwara Charan Kanwal.

From Kiratpur Guru Nanak and Mardana travelled eastward and passing through Suker reached the place where now Mandi town stands. The word 'Mandi' literally stands for a place meant for trading. At the time of Guru Nanak, the paths coming from Leh, Yarkand, Kangra, etc. converged here and traders from Hoshiarpur, Bilaspur and Suker came here for business. Being a trading centre, the town had come to be known as Mandi by the time of Guru Nanak, i.e. around A.D. 1510. About ten miles (16 kms.) west of Mandi is a *kund* (water reservoir) of Sikandar Dhar, known as Rivalsar. Guru Nanak and Mardana passed through Mandi and

383. J. Hutchinson, *Punjab Hill States*, Vol. II, p. 494.

384. Although this story does not find mention in any of the *Janamsakhi* versions but it represents a local tradition.

385. According to a local tradition, Guru Nanak performed *kirtan* here for thirteen days. That is why Guru Hargobind named the town Kiratanpur which later on got corrupted to Kiratpur.

Rivalsar and reached Jwalaji that is in the north-west of Mandi.³⁸⁶ These days Jwalaji falls in the Gopipur tehsil of Kangra district. Jwalaji was situated on a route in the north of the Beas valley that lead to Kangra from the south. From Nadaun, Jwala Mukhi is a little distance away in the north. No idols are worshipped in the temple of Jwalaji. Here a flame comes out of the mountain-top which is worshipped. There are several mythic stories current about this flame. Maharaja Kharak Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had donated silver doors to the temple. Guru Nanak and Mardana came to Jwalaji. They stayed here for a while and then travelled eastwards.

Baijnath (Kirgram)

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Jwalaji and taking route via Nadaun reached Kangra. The Muslim historians call it Nagarkot³⁸⁷ or Bhimkot. There is an ancient temple in this town. Many scholars hold that the place where Kangra is inhabited resembles a human ear. That is why it is called Kangra.³⁸⁸ It is said that Maha Mai, the consort of Mahadeva, committed *sati* and her limbs fell down on different parts of India. The place where her head and ear fell is now commemorated by the temple of Kangra. Thus, this temple is considered very holy. There was a fort adjoining the temple which was conquered by Mahmood in 1009 and later by Feroz Tughlaq in 1360. At the time of Guru Nanak, Ram Chand was the king of Kangra who ascended the throne in A.D. 1510.³⁸⁹ Guru Nanak visited the Kangra temple and therefrom went eastwards.

On the east of Kangra, the land between Kangra and Baijnath is plain. Passing through Palampur, the Guru reached Baijnath which was then known as Kirgram.

Kirgram (modern name : Baijnath) is an important town of Kangra district which is eleven miles (17 kms.) east of Palampur. There are two famous temples in Baijnath wherein are found written the genealogies of the rulers of Kirgram.³⁹⁰ In the 12th century the

386. Only Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* records Guru Nanak's visit to Jwalaji. The *Vilayatvali* version contains the account of Guru's visit to Kirgram, and Jwalaji falls on the way to Kirgram. Thus, Guru Nanak's visit to Jwalaji seems certain.

387. Albaruni records it as Nagar Kot.

388. J. Hutchinson, *Punjab Hill States*, Vol. I, pp. 107-8.

389. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 137.

390. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. VI, pp. 216-17.

town of Kirgram and the Kir race inhabiting there, were quite famous as it comes out clear from the brass plates (dated A.D. 1050) found in Chamba.³⁹¹ However, at the time of Guru Nanak, the Kir regime was on the decline and the king of Kirgram was considered subservient to the Kangra ruler because there is no separate reference to Kirgram Baijnath. Before the advent of British rule, the rulers of Kirgram were eligible to get married in the royal family of Kangra. As a consequence of the decline of the Kir regime, the fort there also fell down and the name of the town also changed after the name of a temple in the town.³⁹²

When Guru Nanak reached Kirgram, the king of the day, whose name is not traceable, is said to have invited the Guru to his house for meals.³⁹³ The Guru spent some time in Kirgram and then journeyed ahead.

Mount Kailash (*Sumer*)

Baijnath (Kirgram) is situated on the way that passes through Dalachi Pass and leads to the capital town of Kulu.³⁹⁴ From here Guru Nanak and Mardana went ahead into the Lahaul and Spiti valley. Earlier this region was part of Ladakh, but in 1848 the English included it in the Kangra district.³⁹⁵ Spiti is towards the north-east of Kulu and Lahaul is on the west of Spiti. One has to pass through Rohtang Pass if one wants to go to Lahaul from Kulu. However, if one wants to go to Spiti, one has to cross the Hamtu and Sigari rivers, that is on the eastern side of Rohtang.³⁹⁶ Twenty-five miles east of Rohtang is the Hastu or Chandan Kala Pass. Passing through it Guru Nanak reached the Spiti region. There is a village, Malana, near the

391. J. Hutchinson, *Punjab Hill States*, Vol. I, p. 106.

392. *Punjab Hill States*, p. 125.

393. In the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, the fifth *sakhi* is that of Kirnagar which confirms that the Guru did visit the town Kirnagar or Kirgram. The author calls the town as that of ants (*kiri*) and connects it with the Guru's hymn.

Baijnath is situated on the road that leads northwards from Palampur. Thus, from the geographical point of view also, the Guru's visit to Kirgram Baijnath can be placed.

394. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XIV, p. 383.

395. C.L. Datta, *Laddakh and Western Himalayan Politics* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis available at Panjab University Library).

396. James Douie, *Punjab, North Western Frontier and Kashmir*, Cambridge, 1916, p. 236.

Chandan Kala Pass. Here the Guru is remembered as Nanak Tapa. Although no episode relating to Guru Nanak's stay here has come to notice yet the tradition of Guru Nanak having visited the place is still current.³⁹⁷

A part of Spiti or Piti touches Tibet and there are passes on this side through which trade with Tibet had been carried for the past several centuries. These passes are on the northern side of Sipki Pass and on the eastern side of Somrari lake. These were called Saprang or Prang Passes.³⁹⁸ It was through these Passes that Zorawar Singh had invaded Tibet in April 1841. Guru Nanak and Mardana also took this route to Tibet and passing through places like Chomurti and Boling reached the Mansarovar and Kailash mountains. The Indian pilgrims had been circumambulating the Kailash since centuries. On this route, several groups of Sidhas met the Guru. Bhai Gurdas has made a reference to them.

Then they climbed up the Sumer,
Saw there a group of Sidhas.

Sumer and Meru are two synonymous words just as Spiti and Piti and Saprang and Parang. In the Chinese texts Meru has variously been written as Singh Ling and the Puranas call it Maha Meru.³⁹⁹ Charles A. Shiring who served as Deputy Commissioner of Almora for several years⁴⁰⁰ and Swami Pranavananda who spent several years in Tibet and wrote a book, *Explorations in Tibet*⁴⁰¹ have accepted the Meru mountain as the Kailash Mountain. Almost all western scholars agree to this view. Thus, Bhai Gurdas's verse saying that Guru Nanak went to Sumer holds good historically.

The Sidhas who met Guru Nanak near the Kailash and Mansarovar put many questions to him. They asked as to how had they covered such a difficult hilly terrain. Guru Nanak replied that they put full faith in God and have been able to reach here. The Sidhas then asked how the people living in plains beyond the mountains did. The Guru replied that there prevails anarchy in India. The kings who should be protectors of the people had become

397. Statement by Sardar Gurlal Singh, Gurmukh Niwas, Patiala—References to Chandan Kala Pass and Malan Village are based on this statement.

398. J. Hutchinson, *Punjab Hill States*, Vol. II, Lahore, 1933, p. 488.

399. S. Muzaffar Ali, *Geography of the Puranas*, New Delhi, 1966.

400. *Western Tibet and British Borderland*, New Delhi, 1966.

401. *Explorations in Tibet*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 3.

oppressive. People are religious no doubt but the lack of divine knowledge had led to hypocrisy and prudery to dominate over the true spirit of religion. The rulers accept bribes and evil abounds all around. In reply to the questions of the Sidhas, he again said that the Sidhas had hid themselves in the mountains and there were not many who could guide the masses to the path of truth.⁴⁰² The Sidhas appreciated the brief and cryptic answers of the Guru.

There are four Tibetan temples on the bank of Mansarovar in which the statue of Guru Nanak is also placed along with other idols.⁴⁰³ This idol of Guru Nanak is also worshipped.⁴⁰⁴ That is perhaps why the Tibetan scholar Tarunga Tulku has said that many Tibetans believe that Guru Nanak was the incarnation of Padamsambhava.⁴⁰⁵ Padamsambhava had gone to Tibet from the Mandi (now in Himachal Pradesh) in the eighth century. He preached Buddhism in Tibet with great zeal and success.

Ladakh and Kashmir : Dialogue with Brahm Das

Guru Nanak travelled on the south-west of Mansarovar and Kailash mountains. The circumambulation of Kailash was 64 miles (102.4 kms) and that of Mansarovar 32 miles (51 kms).⁴⁰⁶ Going from the eastern side of these mountains Guru Nanak turned north-west. Then he went to Gortok, earlier called Garu. Therefrom he passed by the Rutok and Pansog lakes and reached Ladakh following the present route through Chasul.⁴⁰⁷

402. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, I : XXIX. In the *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban Janamsakhis*, the Sidhas who had met Guru Nanak were Gorakh Nath, Bharthari, Gopi Chand and Charpat. They questioned the Guru on several religious and philosophical issues and the Guru answered them in detail. This dialogue between Guru Nanak and Sidhas is contained in Guru Nanak's *Sidha Gosti* (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 938).

403. Sewa Ram Singh, *The Divine Master*, p. 140.

404. Tarunga Tulku, "Similarities Between Sikhism and Buddhism" in *Indian Times*, Delhi, 6th March, 1976.

405. Padmasambhav Urgian was a resident of Swat valley in the north-west of Kashmir. He was an expert in Tantrik knowledge. In the second half of 8th century, he lived in the hill town of Mandi. From there he was invited by the King of Tibet so as to preach Buddhism. He played a special role in carrying Buddhism to Tibet. That is why Tibetan manuscripts in Mandi are called "jauhar". See *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Publications Division, New Delhi, pp.5-7. See also J. Hutchison, *Punjab Hill States*, Vol. II, Lahore, 1933, p. 373.

406. Swami Pranavananda, *Explorations in Tibet*, p. 28.

407. In all the *Janamsakhis*, Guru Nanak's visit to Kailash and Kashmir has been

From Chasul, Guru Nanak went to Upashi town and then to Karu which is 20 miles (32 kms) off Upashi. On the south-east of Karu are two villages, inhabitants of which worship only Guru Nanak. They worship no other god or goddess besides him.⁴⁰⁸ This shows that Guru Nanak did visit this place. However, no shrine could be traced. It is worth remembering that Ladakh was then a part of Tibet. It is just possible that most of the traditions of Guru Nanak's visit to Tibet might have spread from the Ladakh region. Otherwise, Mansarovar, Kailash, Garu and such other regions were, as they are even today, part of Tibet.

On the east of Karu town is the oldest habitation of Ladakh-Hamus. According to a tradition, a stone is said to exist there on which Guru Nanak sat and held the dialogue. Many in Hamus believe that the foundation of this habitation was laid by Guru Nanak.⁴⁰⁹ Hamus is 25 miles (40 kms.) south of Leh, the capital town of Ladakh.

Visiting Karu and Hamus in Leh region, Guru Nanak set out on the path that leads to Isakardu, parallel to the Indus river. Like Leh, Isakardu is also on the bank of river Indus. Eighteen miles (29 kms.) off Leh is Nimmi and 32 miles (51 kms.) off Nimmi is Khalasi town.⁴¹⁰ In between these two towns is a town called Basgo. There has been prevalent till today a tradition in Basgo that a monster got hold of the Guru, but when the latter pushed him back he struck against a rock. The sign visible on the rock even today is said to be of that monster.⁴¹¹ There was an old *gurdwara* in Isakardu commemorating the Guru's visit there.⁴¹² This shrine was in good shape till 1947. These days the Isakardu region falls in the Pakistan-occupied territory.

There was an ancient path that led from Isakardu to Kargil. Traversing on this path, Guru Nanak turned southwards and reached

➤ included in his travels in the north. In that situation, it seems correct that Guru Nanak went to Ladakh and Kashmir on his return journey from Kailash mountain.

408. Statement by Col. J.S. Guleria, New Delhi. He had served for some time as the supply officer in the Ladakh region. At that time, he had made special efforts to find out the places which the Guru might have visited. We are grateful to him for the information given to us on Ladakh.

409. Statement by Col. J.S. Guleria.

410. Fredrick Drew, *Jammu and Kashmir Territories*, Route No. 22, pp. 538-39.

411. Statement by Col. J.S. Guleria.

412. Kahn Singh, *Gurshabd Ratnakar (Mahan Kosh)*, p. 943.

Kargil. A *gurdwara* and a temple exist there side by side : This *gurdwara* is said to be historical. Coming about 50 miles (80 kms.) south from Kargil⁴¹³ is Drass which is quite close to the Zojila Pass.⁴¹⁴ Crossing Zojila, Guru Nanak passed through Baltal town and reached the famous centre of Hindu pilgrimage, Amar Nath.

Amar Nath temple is situated in a mountain cave where water peeps down all the time, but this water turns into ice *lingam* before falling down. Hindu pilgrims from far off places visit this place. From Amar Nath, the Guru travelled through Pahalgam and reached Matan, near Anant Nag. Matan was known for its ancient temple of Martand which was razed to the ground by the Muslims. A little away from the Martand temple are water springs. The Guru took his seat nearby them. During the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, six recensions of the *Guru Granth Sahib* used to be installed at the place where Guru Nanak is said to have rested. That *dharamsala* has since fallen down and *Guru Granth Sahib* is now installed in a newly-constructed room.⁴¹⁵ Matan and Martand are quite close to Anant Nag, also called Islamabad, which is a major city of Kashmir. At the time of Guru Nanak's visit Matan was well-known as a centre of Hindu culture. Even these days the *pandas* of Matan maintain ancestral *vahis* (traditional record books) like their counterparts at Haridwar. These *vahis* contain genealogies of the pilgrims who visit the shrine. At the time of Guru Nanak's visit, there lived one Brahm Das, a native of Bij Bihara.⁴¹⁶ He had gathered a good collection of books and was ever ready to have dialogue with any saint or faqir who visited the place. When he learnt that a faqir, accompanied by a *Mirasi*, had come, he came to have a dialogue with the Guru. No sooner did he reach the Guru's place than he asked the Guru why he wore leather, how he lived, why did he not lead life in accordance with the code recommended by the *Sastras*.⁴¹⁷ The Guru replied that

413. Statement by Col. J.S. Guleria.

414. The people of Tibet and Ladakh call this Pass Zojila, but others call it the Drass. However name Zojila is more popular.

415. See the note (first note on *Sakhi* No. 49) of Bhai Vir Singh, editor of the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*.

416. See footnote to *Sakhi* No. 49 by Bhai Vir Singh, *Puratan Janamsakhi*, Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar. Bij Bihara was also a centre of Hindu pilgrimage which finds mention in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. The place was close to Matan.

417. The episode relating to Brahm Das having dialogue with the Guru is in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. This finds mention in no other *Janamsakhi* text and it seems correct.

there was no need to perform any ritual except to remember the Lord who has created this manifest world, made the sky, earth and the entire universe. He said :

His self He created and Himself realized;
 Separating sky and earth, the canopy He spread.
 Unpropped by pillars He holds the sky, by His manifest Ordinance.
 Then created He sun and moon, whose light is pervasive;
 Then by a wondrous miracle made He night and day.
 Then were instituted holy bathing-spots,
 For ritual bath and discourses *dharma* on sacred days.
 None Thy equal—what can one say in description of Thee ?
 He on the throne eternal is seated—
 The rest all is evanescent.⁴¹⁸ —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1279

Brahm Das paid his obeisance. After a short stay at Matan the Guru resumed his journey.

Panja Sahib

From Matan, Guru Nanak went to Anant Nag and then to Srinagar, the latter is about 40 miles (64 kms.) south of Anant Nag. The town of Srinagar was founded by Emperor Ashoka. Shankaracharya temple is situated on a mountain top which overlooks the town of Srinagar. During his stay here the Guru met the *yogis*⁴¹⁹ and by holding discourses with them he removed many of their misgivings as he had earlier done in case of Brahm Das. However, there is no *gurdwara* at the Shankracharya top. There is one centre (*Dera*) of the Udasis built in memory of Baba Sri Chand but there is no information about any historical shrine commemorating the Guru's visit to Srinagar.⁴²⁰

From Srinagar Guru Nanak took the southward route which led to Baramula, earlier known as Vramula. Baramula is a town on the bank of Jehlum, about 35 miles (56 kms.) from Srinagar. Across the river, near Baramula, there is a shrine in the memory of Guru

418. This is the first stanza of *Malar ki Var* (M.1). The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that the Guru composed all the twenty-seven stanzas of this *var* at Matan.

419. Kahn Singh, *Gurshabd Ratnakar (Mahan Kosh)*, p. 286.

420. Bhai Kahn Singh says that the *gurdwara* was got constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh on Hari Parbat after ascertaining from the locals that the Guru had visited the place. Maybe, this is correct because the fort of Hari Parbat was got constructed by Emperor Akbar.

Nanak at Harmukh Ganga which is a testimony of the Guru's visit to this region.⁴²¹ The Guru then travelled close to Kulahal via Uri. If one travels from Baramula on the route on the left of Jehlum one reaches Uri, a town situated on the south-west about 30 miles (48 kms.) away from Baramula.⁴²²

About 30 miles away from Kohala and about eight miles (13 kms.) east of the modern *pucca* road, is Kaliansar. There is a tradition that Guru Nanak visited this place. A *gurdwara* also existed there.⁴²³ Travelling west of Kohala, Guru Nanak reached the place presently known as Hasan Abdal (Panja Sahib).

Hasan Abdal is 20 miles (32 kms.) east of Attock. According to Alexander Cunningham, there was earlier a Buddhist monastery here which the Chinese traveller Heun Tsang, called the pond of King Alapatra of Nagra. According to him, the ruins of Buddhist monasteries and stupas were found on the hills around here.⁴²⁴ A *Gujjar* by the name of Hasan had got an inn constructed there around which developed the town of that name.⁴²⁵ According to a tradition, Guru Nanak met Hasan at this place. At that time Hasan was grazing his cattle. He felt that the Guru was a spiritually enlightened soul and offered him milk. Both Guru Nanak and Mardana drank the milk.⁴²⁶ The tomb of Hasan is still extant on a nearby hill.⁴²⁷

On another hillock close by lived another Muslim holy man

421. Kahn Singh, *Gurshabd Ratnakar (Mahan Kosh)*, p. 286.

422. Three routes are historically well known connecting West Punjab with Srinagar : (1) Srinagar, Baramula, Rajauri, Naushahra, Bhimbu, Gujrat or Wazirabad. During the times of Ranjit Singh and prior to him, this route was famous. The Sikh army had taken this route to conquer Kashmir. (2) Jehlum, Qila Khamas, Pir Sarwan, Chingas, Naushahra, Rajauri, Behramgalla, Srinagar. There is no shrine of Guru Nanak on both these routes. (3) The third route that we have narrated has several memorials of Guru Nanak. Therefore it can be safely surmised that the Guru took this route to return to West Punjab. Moreover, this route was more frequented because both the other routes pass through Pir Panjal and as a result of snowfall both of them got closed during the winter whereas this route remained open throughout the year.

423. Kahn Singh, *op.cit.*

424. *Attock District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1932, p. 319.

425. The *Attock District Gazetteer*, says that Abdal was the other name of Hasan, but the word 'abdal' literally means 'the blessed one.' Maybe, his inn got the name Hasan Abadal.

426. Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*.

427. *Attock District Gazetteer*, p. 319.

named Wali Qandhari.⁴²⁸ He belonged to the *Rafizi* sect of *Shia* Muslim tradition.⁴²⁹ When Guru Nanak met him, he did not show the usual courtesy. The Guru climbed down the hill and sat at the roof of the hill. First spring was up the hill later on came down. Wali Qandhari felt jealous and he pushed down a rock towards the Guru. As is apparent even today, there was no tree on this hill and the rolling stone reached the Guru who put his open hand on it to stop it from rolling on. The same stone bearing the imprint of the open hand has been preserved.⁴³⁰ On 27th December 1835, a German traveller went to Hasan Abdal and he saw this stone lying near the place where the *Guru Granth Sahib* was installed.⁴³¹ Guru Nanak spent some time at Hasan Abdal. When Mardana performed *kirtan*, the sound of the divine melody reached the ears of Wali Qandhari. He was deeply impressed and one day he came down the hill to have a dialogue with the Guru. He asked the Guru, "O holy man ! What is thy name ?" The Guru replied, "Believer in God." Thereafter dialogue on God ensued. The Guru told him that all quarrels between the *Rafizis* and *Sunnis* are uncalled for. For the saints, all are God's own.⁴³² Wali Qandhari bowed before the Guru. The Guru sojourned for a while and then went ahead.

428. The *Bala Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak went to Qandhar to meet Wali Qandhari. This cannot be accepted as correct. The *Attock District Gazetteer* says that Wali Qandhari lived on a hillock at Hasan Abdal. The Sikh tradition also accepts this. Therefore it can be safely accepted that the Guru met Wali Qandhari at this place. The German traveller, Hugel, contends that the person who met the Guru was a disciple of Wali Qandhari. The real name of Wali Qandhari could not be ascertained.

429. A manuscript, dated A.D. 1658, of the *Bala Janamsakhi* makes a special note that Guru told Wali Qandhari that both the *Rafizis* and the *Sunnis* are the creations of one God. It indicates that Wali Qandhari was a *Rafizi*, a branch of the *Shia* Muslims. Other Sufi saints who had met the Guru and who find a mention in the *Janamsakhi* literature mostly belonged to the *Sunni* tradition.

430. The current tradition regarding the Panja Sahib is not found in any *Janamsakhi*, but this does not mean that the Guru did not pay a visit to this place. The popular *sakhi* got its present form in the time of Ranjit Singh when Gurdwara Panja Sahib came into being.

431. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and Punjab*, London, 1845, pp.225-26. Hugel says that this water spring was earlier at the top of the hill, but according to Alexander Cunningham, this spring and the lake have been in existence ever since the time of the Buddhists, but the spring was first on the top of hill and subsequently it came down the hill.

432. The 1658 A.D. manuscript of the *Bala Janamsakhi* records that the Guru taught

Bal Nath

Hasan Abdal was situated on the *kutchra* road which led from Lahore to Peshawar and this road was strengthened later on by Sher Shah Suri. He also planted trees on both of its sides and got inns constructed. Guru Nanak left south-east of Hasan Abdal and reached Tilla Bal Gudain⁴³³ (now Jehlum district). The place finds mention in the *Ain-i-Akbari* wherein it is stated that there is a centre of Bal Nath, a *yogi*, in Sind Sagar Doaba, near Shamasabad which is called Tilla Bal Nath. *Yogis* from far and wide came to visit this place.⁴³⁴

Guru Nanak reached here and got lodged at a place which was a little distance away from Bal Nath's centre. When Bal Nath learnt that a holy man sat not far from his place, he went to the Guru and brought him to his place.⁴³⁵ He gave the Guru much respect. In an exclusive meeting, he asked Guru Nanak who was his spiritual preceptor and what was his path to salvation. The Guru, in reply, recited the following hymn :

A boat laden with sins am I—beware lest shaken by the wind it sinks.
 Lord attainment incarnate ! to have sight of Thee
 Have we approached Thee—
 Inevitably *to us* grant exaltation.
 Master, saviour ! save us.
 Grant us perfect devotion to the Eternal—
 To Thee am I a sacrifice. (I-Pause)
 True Siddhas, Yoga-practitioners, *Yogis* and itinerant mendicants are
 those
 That on the Sole conferrer of attainments have meditated.
 Those getting realization touch the Lord's feet
 And attain union.
 Lord ! I know not the *way of* repetition of texts, austerity, self-restraint
 or ritual—
 Thy Name solely I utter.
 Saith Nanak : As the Master, *image of* the Supreme Being was met,
 By the holy Word were all doubts set at rest.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 878

➤ this lesson to Wali Qandhari. Since the Guru's teaching was above sectarian sentiments, giving lesson to Qandhari seems in order. However, the story of Wali Qandhari is found in no other *Janamsakhi* version except the *Bala*.

433. It is said that *Tilla Bal Godain* was so named because here a woman had, so as to test a *jogi*, weaved (*godain*) the hair (*bal*) of a *jogi*.

434. Sir Jadunath Sarkar (tr.) *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1949, p. 319.

435. Miharban, *Janamsakhi*, Part II, p. 174.

Bal Nath was highly influenced listening this hymn. He also said that Guru Nanak had realized God and that devotion (*bhakti*) was the sole way to God-realization.⁴³⁶ The Guru stayed with him for some time. The imprints of the Guru's feet can be seen even today on the stone where he sat. There was also a small *gurdwara* in memory of the visit and before the Partition a *sadhu* used to look after the shrine.⁴³⁷

A little distance away from this *Tilla* has been the famous fort of Rohtas which is three miles (5 kms.) west of Dina Railway Station. It was got built by Sher Shah Suri after the time of Guru Nanak. After this fort the town is also named Rohtas.⁴³⁸ Nearby this fort flows a fountain called Choha Baba Nanak. This is said to be a memorial of the time of Guru Nanak as, it is said, Guru Nanak brought it out by picking up a stone.⁴³⁹

Sialkot

From *Tilla* Bal Godain, Guru Nanak and Mardana travelled toward south-east on the route which was known as *Shah Rah*. On the way they crossed the Jehlum and the Chenab rivers to reach Sialkot. It was an ancient town which was earlier named Sakla or Salkot. It had sometime in the past been the capital town of entire Punjab.⁴⁴⁰

Guru Nanak and Mardana stayed at a place outside the town under a *ber* (berry) tree. On this site now stands a *gurdwara* to which the devotees thronged in large numbers before Partition. While the Guru himself halted here, he sent Mardana to the town to buy truth with one paisa and falsehood with another. Mardana visited all the shops but no one replied. There was a shopkeeper by the name of Mula. He took two pieces of paper and wrote on them : "death is truth (reality)" and "life is falsehood (transient)". Mardana took both the pieces of paper to the Guru. Guru Nanak was highly impressed by this and called on Mula at his shop. He had a conversation with Mula and told him that he had realized the reality of life. Bhai Mula

436. This *sakhi* is based on "Gosti Bal Nath Nal" in *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Part II, p. 174.

437. Kahn Singh, *Gurshabd Ratnakar (Mahan Kosh)*, p. 858, *op.cit.*

438. Ganesh Das Vadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, ed. Kirpal Singh, Amritsar, p. 163.

439. See entry on "Rohtas" in Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 785.

440. Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, pp. 223-224.

replied that he has not yet learnt much of truth but he should be able to with his grace. He was so impressed by the Guru's ideas that he left his home and prepared to accompany the Guru. Guru Nanak lived in Sialkot for sometime and then travelled farther on.⁴⁴¹

Mian Mittha

Guru Nanak accompanied by Mardana and Bhai Mula (the latter had joined them from Sialkot) left Sialkot for Talwandi. Travelling south-east from Sialkot he reached the town now named Kotla Mian Mittha.⁴⁴² Here lived a spiritually enlightened faqir by the name of Mian Mittha. Guru Nanak stayed outside the habitations of Kotla. When Mian Mittha learnt that a holy man has come to his village and that he is accompanied by a rebeck player, he met the Guru and had a dialogue with him. He said :

The first name is of *Khuda*, then of the Prophet
If Nanak recites *Quran*, he will be accepted in the Divine Court.

Guru Nanak replied :

First comes *Khuda's* name, Prophets stand at His door.
O Shaikh ! cultivate nobility, only then will you earn acceptance.⁴⁴³

Mian Mittha said that just as a lamp cannot be lightened up without oil, without prophet salvation was not possible and union with God could not be realized.

In reply Guru Nanak uttered the following hymn⁴⁴⁴ :

Let man live as by scriptures guided.
Let the wick of fear of God in the self be put.
Let this wick with realization of holy truth be lighted.
Thus will this oil and lamp be lit.
In its light will union with the Lord come about.

441. This *sakhi* is found only in Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*. However, the name of Bhai Mula occurs in one of the compositions of Guru Nanak. See *Sakhi*, "Bhai Mule da Dehant." Bhai Mula was a resident of Sialkot. This fact is acknowledged by all the scholars.

442. Bhai Kahn Singh calls Mian Mittha's Kotla as Mithan Kot which is incorrect. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak reached Mian Mittha's Kotla via Pasrur. Pasrur is a tehsil town of Sialkot district (Pakistan).

443. This question and answer are found in *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. See *Sakhi* No. 36. Although this episode is not mentioned in any other *Janamsakhi* but the dialogue seems in order in the given context.

444. The Guru has included both Mian Mittha's question and answer thereto in this

As the self with the holy Word is penetrated,
 By devotion to God comes joy.
 Know, the whole world is evanescent.
 By devotion in this world,
 Shall ye get a place at the Divine Portal.
 Then, say Nanak, in joy may you gambol.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 25

Mian Mittha then asked as to which is that *Quran* the reading of which earns man acceptance, what is that austerity which helps union with God, what is that *Roza* and *Namaz* which help concentrate mind on God. Guru Nanak asked Mardana to play rebeck and recited the following hymn :

Make the mosque of compassion, thy prayer-mat of sincerity;
 The Qoranic scripture of honest and legitimate earning.
 Be modesty thy circumcision, noble conduct thy *Ramazan* fast—
 Such a Mussalman shouldst thou be.
 By thy *Kaaba* thy good deeds, truth thy preceptor;
 Good actions thy *Kalima* and *Namaz*.
 Make thy rosary of what pleases God :
 Thus, saith Nanak, will thy honour *before God* be vindicated.⁴⁴⁵

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 141

Mian Mittha was highly impressed at this and he bowed before the Guru. After spending some more time there; Guru Nanak left for Talwandi.

Talwandi

Guru Nanak, Mardana and Bhai Mula left Kotla Mian Mittha and reached Talwandi. They stayed outside the village. Mardana went into the village and met members of his family. Guru Nanak's parents also learnt from Mardana about the arrival of their son. They went to him and brought him home. The entire family got together. Guru Nanak had entered his house after so many years. It was natural for members of the family to feel rejoiced. All of them desired that (Guru) Nanak had come back after long travels in far off lands and

hymn. The first verse of the recited hymn is the question which we have omitted here.

445. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records here a hymn of Guru Arjan which is apparently incorrect. The above noted hymn seems correct in reply to Mian Mittha's question. The questions are mentioned in the *Janamsakhi*.

therefore he should be served with dainty dishes. The mother was the happiest of all. She asked him to name any delicacy and she promised to prepare that for him. However, within the heart of Nanak was another desire which was more tasty and juicy than any other dish or desert. The Guru gave no answer, but when he was compelled, he uttered the following hymn⁴⁴⁶ :

In contemplation of the Lord are comprehended sweetly tasting
delicacies;
In listening to the holy Word, the saline dishes.
Uttering the holy Word is foods of sour and pungent taste;
Sound of holy music condiments and spices.
Devotion to the Lord is thirty-six viands—
These by Divine grace are attained.
Friend ! to taste of other than these is to ruin bliss—
Such gormandizing as produces torment to the body,
And fills with foul thinking the mind. (Pause I)
A consciousness dyed in God is your vermilion wear;
In giving away charity lie *shining* white dresses.
Snapping worldly attachment is wearing blue and black;
Contemplation of Divine feet is your gown.
Contentment your girdle;
God's Name is wealth and beauty.
Friend ! all other wear ruins bliss—
The wear that to the limbs is torment,
And with foul thinking fills the mind. (Pause I)
To know Thy way is to be master of horses, saddle-cloths, golden tail-
tips;
Turning the mind towards Thy merits is our quiver, arrows, bow, spear
and sword-strap;
Our drums and lances, manifest honour by Thee conferred;
Thy grace my high caste.
Friend ! all accoutrement and mounting other than these is to ruin
bliss.
Such mounting to the body brings torment,
And with evil thinking fills the mind. (Pause I)
Joy in holy Name is our house and home,
Thy grace our family.
To win Thy pleasure, which is beyond description,
Is our mark of rank.
Saith Nanak : He is the true king, needing not anyone's counsel.

446. This *sakhi* is based on what is recorded in Miharban's *Janamsakhi* under section *Guru Ji Talwandi Vich*,

Friend ! to seek ease other than this is ruining bliss.
Such ease to the body brings torment,
And with evil thinking fills the mind. (Pause I)

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 16-17

Guru Nanak stayed at Talwandi for some time. Mula went back to Sialkot from here and Guru Nanak and Mardana started for Sultanpur.

Sultanpur and Meeting with Daulat Khan Lodhi

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Talwandi and reached Sultanpur. Here they met Nanaki and other members of the family. By coincidence Daulat Khan Lodhi also happened to be in town those days. Sikandar Lodhi had appointed him as *Subedar* of Punjab. Therefore, he generally resided at Lahore but would come to his *jagir* at Sultanpur sometimes. When Guru Nanak went to Sultanpur, he happened to be there. When he learnt that his former keeper of stores, Nanak, had come, he called on him. He asked him about his well-being as well as of his present residence. In reply, the Guru recited the following hymn⁴⁴⁷ :

Thoughtless it is to settle down in this world As thought it were a
lasting abode or home,
With all the time our stay uncertain from impending departure.
Our true abode is in the realm that is immutable, eternal.
How can the world be reckoned a lasting abode ?
By truthful doing your journey's provision gather;
In devotion to the Name engage yourself. (Pause I)
The *Yogi* practising yogic postures, the Mullah adopting the pious
stance;
The Brahmins that scriptures expound;
The Siddhas that in temples of deities are settled;
Gods, Siddhas, the divine choristers, keepers of vows of silence,
Muslim divines and leaders in tradition—
All must depart far away; others too for departure are poised.
Kings, lords, chiefs, nobles—all these have departed.
In a short while shall come departure to all—
Know, my self! thou too must leave.
In holy texts is this truth expounded, which few realize.
Thus submits Nanak : In water and on land is He pervasive.

447. Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak Dev*, pp. 374-76.

Allah is beyond our knowing, inaccessible,
 Almighty, Creator, gracious :
 The whole world is evanescent;
 The merciful God alone is immutable.
 God alone is immutable, who to no writ is subject.
 Heaven and earth *one day* must vanish—
 He alone is immutable.
 In the day moves the sun, at night the moon,
 And millions of stars that speed.
 Nanak : proclaim this truth :
 None is immutable but He alone!⁴⁴⁸ —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 64

When Guru Nanak explained that *Allah* (God) is indescribable, unfathomable, creator and compassionate whereas the entire creation is transient and the destination of all the creatures is the One God, Daulat Khan was deeply impressed. He bowed before the Guru.

Guru Nanak stayed with Nanaki for some time. At this time Mardana requested him that he has already travelled a lot of places and that he should now visit Mecca as well. On Mardana's request, the Guru made up his mind to pay a visit to Mecca also. So he set out towards Pakpatan.

Shaikh Ibrahim

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Sultanpur, crossed the Sutlej in a boat and reached Pakpatan.⁴⁴⁹ Although Pakpatan is a little distance away from the river yet it was a famous ferry on the western bank of the Sutlej at the time of Guru Nanak. Several land routes converged here. This was the Guru's second visit to the town.⁴⁵⁰ As during his last

448. The internal evidence of the hymn suggests that it is an explanation of the word *mukam* and that the Guru might have recited it for the benefit of some Muslims because Muslim influence was dominant. The use of words like "*sultan*", "*umrao*", "*khan*", etc. also proves that the Guru is conversing with a Muslim of high rank. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records that the Guru recited this hymn to Daulat Khan Lodhi. There is much to show that the episode did occur and can be treated as a historical fact.

449. The tradition of Guru Nanak sailing in a boat is current in *Uch Sharif* even today. There lies a small boat and it is said that Guru Nanak had boarded it. Statement by Sardar Balwant Singh Kalra who had lived near *Uch Sharif* for several years. Therefore he also served as President of Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bangkok, during the 1960s.

450. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak visited Pakpatan twice which is borne out by a strong tradition.

visit even now Shaikh Ibrahim occupied the spiritual seat of Shaikh Farid. Shaikh Ibrahim was quite liberal and warm-hearted. He welcomed the Guru and lodged him in his *Dargah*.

Guru Nanak would get up in the morning and perform *kirtan*. Mardana would play rebeck and the Guru would be lost in divine melody. In the 16th century, the holy men used to express their feelings in verse.⁴⁵¹ The tradition was so strong that every such saint would either possess or remember by heart his own verses or famous verses of some other holy man. When Guru Nanak recited his own hymns, Shaikh Ibrahim also felt inspired to recite some verses.⁴⁵² One day having a discourse on God with Guru Nanak, Shaikh Ibrahim recited this couplet :

Says Farid :

Farid, tear thy clothes to strips; assume coarse woollen wear.
Assume whatever wear will bring thee near the Beloved.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1383

Guru Nanak replied :

In the home is the wife pining for her Lord far away,
Ever thinking on Him :
Union with Him may soon come about, should her love be sincere.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 594

Shaikh Ibrahim again said :

Saith Farid : In youth this life-female loved not the Lord;
Grown in years, she died.
In the grave wails her soul,
Lord ! Thee I failed to meet.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1380

451. The compositions of several holy men who lived before Guru Nanak are also found included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

452. Some scholars hold the view that the hymns included in *Guru Granth Sahib* in the name of Shaikh Farid are that of Shaikh Ibrahim. But name given there is Shaikh Farid who could not be any other person than Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar. Shaikh Ibrahim is said to have only handed over these compositions of Shaikh Farid to Guru Nanak who met him twice. Most of the Muslim writers are of the view that Shaikh Farid did not write in the local dialect. Some writers including Dr. K.A. Nizami of Aligarh University, and author of *Life and Times of Shaikh Farid* with whom I discussed this matter expressed the view that Shaikh Farid did write some couplets in Multani. The author of *Akhbar-ul-Akhiar* is also of the view that Shaikh Farid wrote couplets in Multani. See, K.A. Nizami, *Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-u-din* and Wahid Ahmad Mahsud, *Hazrat Baba Farid-u-din Mahsua, Ganj-i-Shakar*, Karachi, 1965.

To this Guru Nanak replied :

The woman of bad ways, self-complacent;
Of blackened, impure mind—
Should she have merit, with her Lord would she have bliss :
Not the foolish female, of bad qualities, saith Nanak.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1088

Shaikh Ibrahim was deeply impressed and felt pleased on listening to the hymns of Guru Nanak. He asked the Guru that it needed a dagger to kill the mind. To this the Guru replied :

With knife from truth made,
The steel too of truth,
Of indescribable workmanship;
On the grindstone of the holy word sharpened,
In the scabbard of good qualities sheathed—
Should the sheikh with such knife be slaughtered,
The blood of avarice oozes out.
Such slaughtering is of the approved kind, to the Lord acceptable.
Saith Nanak : Such a sacrifice, at the Divine Portal is by the Lord
seen and approved.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 956

The Shaikh felt very happy to listen to this and he handed over many couplets that lay with him.⁴⁵³ The Guru spent some time here and composed some stanzas (*Pauris*) which later on served as the first nine stanzas (*Pauris*) of *Asa di Var* as included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.⁴⁵⁴

From Pakpatan, the Guru headed for Multan.

Multan and Baha-ud-Din Makhdum

Multan is one of the ancient towns of Punjab. According to a statement by Alexander Cunningham, Multan was the capital town of the *Mali* community during the time of Alexander the Great. Heun Tsang has also referred to Multan. At the time of Guru Nanak,

⁴⁵³ This entire episode is based on *sakhi* No. 32 (Appendix 24-32) in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*. This does not find mention in any other version. But it is widely believed by the Sikhs to be true.

⁴⁵⁴ The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak composed the first nine stanzas (*Pauris*) of *Asa di Var* at Pakpatan. These nine stanzas (*Pauris*) eulogize the Lord. The *slokas* preceeding them contain some views on Islam. For example, the *slokas* added to the sixth stanza (*Pauris*) talks about "the remains of a Muslim", etc. This testifies the statements made in the *Janamsakhi*.

Multan was the capital of the surrounding territory. In the 18th century before the setting up of the Bahawalpur State, the area comprising of this state and the deserts of Bikaner were all under Multan.⁴⁵⁵ It is also said that the famous *Harnaksh-Prahlad* story took place in this town. After the arrival of Muslims in India, Multan became an important centre of Islam. The tomb of Shamas Tabrez stands now towards the south of Multan. Shamas Tabrez, whose real name was Shamas-ud-Din came from the fertile Afghanistan region in 17th century to settle here.⁴⁵⁶ Shaikh Baha-ud-Din Zakaria migrated to this place in the 12th century. Pilgrims from far off places come to pay their obeisance at the tombs of these two holy men. Multan had become a centre of Muslim holy men because of the tombs of these faqirs. At the time of Guru Nanak, Muslim faqirs of different traditions lived in Multan.

Shaikh Jalal Bukhari (d. A.D. 1291) who was the first of the Bukhari family to settle at Uch was well-known as a spiritually enlightened faqir. He was the disciple of Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakaria Quraishi (d. A.D. 1266).⁴⁵⁷ Baha-ud-Din Zakaria was a close friend of Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar (d. A.D. 1269).⁴⁵⁸ Thus, the descendants of Baha-ud-Din Zakaria in Multan, the spiritual descendants of Farid Shakarganj in Pakpattan and the family of Jalal Bukhari in Uch used to meet one another and were on very good terms. These three families have produced several Muslim divines.

The monastery of Shaikh Farid in Pakpattan, and those of Syad Jalal Bukhari and his grandson Makhdum-i-Jahania in Uch and of Shaikh Baha-ud-Din Zakaria in Multan were considered holy places by the local Muslims. All these three places were owned and looked after by three different persons. Generally, the person appointed was from amongst the family of the founder. He was called *makhdum* and all those who attended on him were called *khadams* (servants). There were always three different Makhdums of these three branches. At the time of Guru Nanak, the seat of Baha-ud-din Zakaria was occupied by one Baha-ud-din from amongst his family.⁴⁵⁹ Shaikh Baha-ud-Din Makhdum was the grandson of Shaikh Yusaf. According

455. *Ancient Geography of India*, Varanasi, 1963, p. 185.

456. *Multan District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1923-24, p. 238.

457. Thomas William Beel, *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, Calcutta, 1881, p. 130.

458. Sir Jadunath Sarkar (tr.) *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 40.

459. Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, Vol. II, Lahore, p. 375.

to *Ain-i-Akbari*, Shaikh Yusuf of this Quraishi family of Multan ruled over Multan for seventeen years. He died in the early years of the reign of Bahlol Lodhi.⁴⁶⁰ Shaikh Baha-ud-din Makhdum was a contemporary of Guru Nanak and most of the *Janamsakhi* literature refers to him as Makhdum Bahavdi.⁴⁶¹

When Guru Nanak reached the tomb of Baha-ud-din Zakaria, the then present Makhdum, Shaikh Baha-ud-din, was about to say his *namaz*. He sent a message through his attendants that he was going to say *namaz* and that Guru Nanak should wait for him a little and must not go without meeting him. When the *khadam* came near the Guru, he assured him that he (Guru) would go back only after seeing him (the Makhdum). The *khadam* felt pleased on hearing this and said that he had known what was in their mind. After some time, the Makhdum came after saying his prayers. Guru Nanak stood up to receive him. They shook hands and settled down. The Makhdum first enquired his welfare. Guru Nanak replied that he was fine after meeting the godly people. Makhdum told him that he knew that he (the Guru) saw both the Muslims and the Hindus with one eye. However, he wanted to know if God is within both of them. The Guru replied that God resides at all places and in all beings. Residing within all of us, He enjoys the joy of world and bears both pain and pleasure. The Guru also recited the following hymn:⁴⁶²

Himself the voluptuary, Himself essence of the pleasure and of
pleasure the enjoyer.
Himself the female begowned, Himself the Husband in couch taking
delight.
The Lord, in dye of delight soaked, is pervasive completely in the
universe.
Himself the fisherman, the fish, water and net;
Himself the net, the bead and the bait.

460. Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, Vol. II, Lahore, p. 375.

461. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* mentions him as Makhdum Bahavadi. It also calls him the grandson of Pir Bahavadi. However, he was the fifth descendant of Shaikh Baha-ud-Din Zakaria.

462. This is based on a *sakhi* in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. See Miharban, *Janamsakhi Guru Nanak Dev*, pp. 438 and 442. In the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, the *sakhi* No. 45 makes a mention of Makhdum Bahavadi which confirms that Baha-ud-din Makhdum was quite close to Guru Nanak. However, this latter *sakhi* is different from the one in Miharban's text and is about the matters relating to spiritual realm. Both the *sakhis* testify to the close relationship that Baha-ud-din enjoyed with the Guru.

Dear sister of my soul ! the Beloved is voluptuary of many delights.
 The happily-wedded ones have perpetual delight with Him.
 See how unlucky I am.
 Thus prays Nanak : Thou art the Lake, the swan,
 The Lotus and buds; night-buds;
 The loveliness view and have delight. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 23

On listening to this, Baha-ud-din bowed before the Guru. After spending some time in Multan, Guru Nanak and Mardana left for Uch.⁴⁶³ Uch is a very ancient town. According to Alexander Cunningham, Alexander the Great had founded a habitation on the place where now stands Uch.⁴⁶⁴ During the reign of Mahmud of Ghazni, Muslim rule was established here. Prior to this, it was named Diogarh.⁴⁶⁵ It was considered an important centre of Islam. The famous Sufi faqir, Jalal-ud-din Bukhari came and settled here in the 13th century. His name added a lot to the grandeur of Uch. Even *Ain-i-Akbari* calls it the principal town of *Suba-i-Multan*.⁴⁶⁶ At the time of Guru Nanak, descendants of Jalal-ud-din Bukhari lived here. Jalal-ud-din Makhdum, son of Jalal-ud-din Bukhari's elder son Syad Muhammad was a spiritually enlightened faqir. He passed away in A.D. 1383.⁴⁶⁷ Those days generally the eldest son became Makhdum, but after the death of *Makhdum-i-Jahania*, his younger brother occupied the seat. The *Makhdum* at the time of Guru Nanak was one of his descendants and his name was Shaikh Haji Abdul Sahib Bukhari. Details about him are available in *Ain-i-Akbari*. He died in A.D. 1525-26.⁴⁶⁸

Guru Nanak put up with the *Makhdum* when he visited Uch. The *Makhdum* was making preparations for *Haj*. After some time Baha-ud-din *Makhdum* of Multan also arrived in Uch. All of them set out for *Haj*. The Guru also accompanied them for *Haj* after spending some days in Uch.

463. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 24, p. 82.

464. *Makhdum-i-Jahania Jahan Gashat*, Karachi, 1963, pp. 73-75.

465. *Ibid*.

466. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 24, p. 82.

467. Col. Jerret and Sir Jadunath Sarkar (tr.), *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol.III, Calcutta, 1948, p. 417.

468. The tradition of Guru Nanak visiting Uch is current there even today. Five things related to him are still preserved in the treasury of *Uch Sharif*. These are : (i) wooden sandals, (ii) *Bairagan*, (iii) bangles made of stone, (iv) mace of stone, and (v) wooden boat. Statement by Sardar Balwant Singh Kalra who had lived in Uch for several years.

Hinglaj

Guru Nanak, Mardana, the Makhdum of Uch and the Makhdum of Multan boarded a boat from Uch. The boat, crossing via Panjnad, took these holy men to Sakkhar through the Indus river.⁴⁶⁹ Those days the Hajis of Multan region went to Mecca via Sakkhar and Shikarpur or through Bolan Pass in Baluchistan.⁴⁷⁰ Makhdum Baha-ud-din and Makhdum Abdul Wahab wanted to get down at Sakkhar and go to Mecca via Shikarpur. They also wanted to go along with their disciples who were travelling in separate boats. Thus, both the Makhdums got off the boat here and went to Shikarpur.

Guru Nanak took another boat in the Indus river and travelling through what is called *Kori* river in the history of Kutch, and Lakhpat river in the *Imperial Gazetteer*; he reached the present city of Lakhpat Nagar⁴⁷¹ (District Bhuj). In olden days, the Lakhpat and Kutch region formed part of Sindh. At the time of Hieun Tsang's visit to India, Kutch was a state of Sindh.⁴⁷² In ancient times, the river Indus and its subsidiary streams fell into the sea after passing through Kutch. The symptoms of these can be seen even now.⁴⁷³ The Arab writers record that in the 7th century two streams, *Mehran* and *Hakara*, originated from the eastern bank of the river Indus and passing through the region of Rann fell into the sea. Up to the 10th century, Lakhpat was a prosperous region. Thereafter its water-level began to decline and by the 18th century, it turned into barren land.⁴⁷⁴ The earthquake of 1819 completely destroyed and buried it under earth along with another town Sindhri, a port town, the earth here pushed itself down by 12-15 feet. The saltish water spread in 2000 square miles (3200 kms.) from Sindhri. Simultaneously on

469. According to a popular tradition connected with the boat lying in Uch, the *Makhdums* of Uch, as well as of Multan, Guru Nanak and a carefree person (he could be Mardana) boarded one boat to reach Panjnad. Guru Nanak and Mardana had to go to Mecca and the other two also wanted to go for *Hajj*. Travel through boats in Indus river had been in vogue for quite some time. See *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 13, pp. 126-27.

470. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 12, pp. 276-77. Shikarpur is a tehsil town in Sakkhar district (Sindh). Prior to the habitation at Quetta, the route to Qandhar through Bolan Pass was via Shikarpur.

471. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 84-85.

472. Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, p. 210.

473. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

474. Ram Singh Kangi Rathor, *Kutchno Sanskrit Daisan* (Gujrati), Ahmedabad, 1958, pp. 244-45. See also *Kutch Gazetteer*, Chapter on description.

an area of 600 square miles earth puffed up in small portions of 18'-50' x 10'-15'. Thus this quake for ever ruined Lakhpat which was earlier quite fertile for paddy, now turned into a barren region.⁴⁷⁵

At the time of Guru Nanak, Lakhpat was called Basta Bandar. It earned revenue worth one lakh *koris* (six *koris* were roughly equivalent to one rupee). Since all transportation was by boats, the village came to be called Lakhpat.⁴⁷⁶ There stands a huge *gurdwara* at Lakhpat in the memory of Guru Nanak. The *granthi* of the *gurdwara* told the author that there was earlier a small building in place of the present one. A manuscript in the *gurdwara* says that the *gurdwara* was built in the beginning of the 19th century and the land of Kuriani village was attached, as *jagir*, to it.⁴⁷⁷ Kuriani is a town about 10-12 miles (19.01 kms) off Lakhpat. There is a very old *sarovar* or pond in Kuriani which is called Nanaksar. There was earlier an old *gurdwara* in Kuriani in the memory of Guru Nanak. It has since been replaced by a new one.⁴⁷⁸

Asa Purani Devi, also called Kali Mata, has been worshipped in the Lakhpat region for the past many centuries. An old temple dedicated to her is situated forty miles (54 kms) east of Lakhpat. These days it is on a *pucca* road that connects Bhuj and Lakhpat via Nakhtarana. There is a tradition in Lakhpat that goddess *Asa Purani* came to Lakhpat to meet Guru Nanak and she requested that the entire world accepts your spiritual suzerainty but let this region Kutch be spared for me. This tradition shows that the Guru did not go into the interior of the region.⁴⁷⁹

Guru Nanak left Lakhpat and travelling through Kuriani and Kotesvara reached the old temple of Naraina Swami that is situated

475. The author is grateful to Mr. D.K. Vaidya, the Curator of the Museum at Bhuj, for rendering into English the relevant portions from the *Kutchno Sanskrit Daisan*.

476. Statement by Samji Mauji Bhatia, Sarpanch of Lakhpat village.

477. The manuscript lying in the *gurdwara* is in Gujrati and its English translation is as follows : "Rao Sri Raedhanji, Rao Sri Golji Samvat 1863, Har Sudi 2, Wednesday. Maharaj Rao Sri Raedhanji declared that the Court bestows one village Kuriani for use by the religious place of Udasi Brahm Chetan son and disciple of Brahm Suchet of Lakhpat village. The portion of the State on the production, revenue, etc. are hereby given to this shrine so that Lakhpat and Kuriani remain cordially inclined and the holy men are duly served."

478. Statement by Mul Das, who served as a *granthi* in the *gurdwara* at Lakhpat during the 1960s.

479. *Ibid*.

on the sea shore. From here he boarded a boat and reached the port of Sonmiani.

The port of Sonmiani was locally called Miani. It is situated 50 miles (80 kms.) west of present Karachi town and was a famous port in Baluchistan. Before the founding of Karachi, most of the trade in Central Asia was carried on from this port via Kalat.⁴⁸⁰ It was a natural port, situated in the sea in a semi-circle of 28 miles (40.8 kms) and with a width of four miles (6.4 kms). Guru Nanak took a boat from Naraina sarovar and reached here.

Hinglaj is very far off from Miani. So the Guru reached Hinglaj. An old temple, on the bank of Huglaj river and in the hills of Hinglaj, was then the principal shrine there. The Muslims called it the shrine of goddess Nani and the Hindus called it of Kali Mata Parbati.⁴⁸¹

This temple was in a high valley, of semi-circle in size. One could reach the temple by climbing up the stairs. Guru Nanak visited this temple. To the east of this temple and a little farther off there is a *gurdwara* in memory of Guru Nanak.⁴⁸² Here some *sadhus* met the Guru. They saw him attired like a Haji and were astonished at this. Nobody could make out whether he was an ascetic or a Bairagi, Vaishnava or Udasi, Hindu or Muslim, Khatri or Brahmin, Vaishya or Sudra. Some of them came to the Guru and asked : "O Beloved of God ! What is your dress and what do you eat ? Also please let us know about yourself so that we can make out as to what should be your diet and could serve you appropriately." In reply to it, the Guru uttered the following hymn⁴⁸³ :

Those adopting the fast of truth, holy pilgrimage, of content and bath
of illumination and meditation;
Making compassion their deity, forgiveness their rosary,
Are pre-eminent among men.
To make union with the lord the *dhoti*; absorption in God the ritually
pure kitchen,

480. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Provincial Series, Baluchistan, Calcutta, 1908, p. 193.

481. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-93.

482. See the drawing in A.W. Huggs, *The Country of Balochistan*.

483. This is based on the *sakhi* titled, "Guru Ji Hinglaj Vich" in Miharban's *Janamsakhi*, pp. 461-62. Although this episode is found in no other *Janamsakhi* version yet it seems correct since it happened at a place which is on the Guru's way to Mecca. Bhai Gurdas has also said that the Guru first went to Mecca and then to Baghdad. Thus, the Guru's journey by sea seems probable and correct. Lakhpat, *sarovar* at Narain Swami and Hinglaj fall on this route.

Love the food consumed—

Saith Nanak : Rare are such as thus are blessed.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1245

When the *sadhus* listened to these words of the Guru, they fell at his feet.

Mecca and Medina

Leaving the temple at Hinglaj, Guru Nanak and Mardana reached the port of Son Miani. They took the sea route and reached the port of Kalhatt, which was very famous those days and which was on the other end of the Persian gulf. Travelling through Kalhatt⁴⁸⁴ (which was near Mascut) came to Aden and thence to the port of *Al-Aswatt* which was very famous among the *Hajis* and which was twelve miles (19 kms.) south of the present port of Jeddah.⁴⁸⁵ From this port, they advanced to reach Mecca.⁴⁸⁶

Mecca was a very important centre of trade even before it became a holy place for the Muslims. The famous Greek writer Ptolemy calls the town Makoraba. Originally, Mecca came into being around the *Zamzam* well. *Sura* 106 of the Quran calls it "the eternal establishment for the carvans both in summer and winter."⁴⁸⁷

Guru Nanak stayed in Mecca for some time. In the meanwhile,

484. Bhai Gurdas holds that Guru Nanak first visited Mecca and thereafter went to Baghdad. The *Bala* and the *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* also support the view that Guru Nanak first visited Mecca and then Medina. There are only two routes from India to go to Mecca—one sea-route and the other land route. In the over-land travel one reached after passing through Baghdad, and Medina. Since all *Janamsakhi* versions agree that the Guru first visited Mecca and since Bhai Gurdas also supports this view, it can be surmised that the Guru took the sea-route.

485. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, both the Muscat and Jeddah ports had not come into existence by the beginning of 16th century. Kalhatt and Al-Aswad were the popular ports then.

486. These days only the Muslims can go to Mecca to pay obeisance at the Ka'aba. Non-Muslims are not allowed. In the 16th century, this discrimination was not strictly implemented. Since holy men do not generally disclose their faith to others, even non-Muslims also visited Mecca among the *Hajis*. The *Dabistan* says that Eknath also visited Mecca. Guru Nanak had also put on the attire of a *Haji* as Bhai Gurdas has said :

"The Baba then went to Mecca, donning blue robes.

He held staff in his hand, a book under his armpit, held a metal pot and a mattress."

(*Bhai Gurdas Var I, Pauri 32*)

487. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, London, Vol. 43, p. 437.

Makhdum Baha-ud-din of Multan and Makhdum Abdul Wahab who had got separated from Guru Nanak at Shikarpur also arrived. They were quite surprised to find the Guru arriving before them.⁴⁸⁸

During his stay at Mecca, one day Guru Nanak slept with his feet towards the holy *Ka'aba*. When other *Hajis* got up in the morning, they found that the Guru's feet were towards *Ka'aba*. One *Haji*, named Jiwan, among them went to the Guru and shook his feet saying that he had his feet towards the abode of God. The Guru answered him that he might shift his feet in the direction in which God did not reside. This implied that according to Islamic faith, God is *Rabul-almin*. He is all-pervasive. When he pulled the Guru's feet to the other side, he perceived the *Ka'aba* building changing direction accordingly.⁴⁸⁹

Many *Hajis* got together there. They developed some apprehension and asked the Guru, "O holy man ! Whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim." The Guru uttered the following hymn⁴⁹⁰ :

Lord ! Thy fear is my hemp-drug, my mind the leather pouch.
 Mad in *this* intoxication, an anchorite am I become.
 With my bowl for Thy sight I beg, that I hunger for.
 This ever at Thy door I beg.
 For Thy sight I yearn;
 At Thy door a beggar—pray dole out this charity *to me*.
 Saffron, flowers, musk and gold by all persons *of all castes* may be
 offered.
 The merit of sandalwood and God's devotees is,
 To all they impart fragrance.

488. All the *Janamsakhi* relate that the Makhdums were surprised to find him reaching Mecca before themselves and thus giving an impression of some miraculous feat. As already stated, Makhdums went to Mecca by land-route whereas Guru Nanak took the sea-route. So it was natural that the Guru arrived in Mecca before the Makhdums because land-route takes more time as compared to the sea-route.

489. The tradition of *Ka'aba* changing direction or place has come from Islamic texts. Farid-u-din Atar (1119-1230), *Tazkara-i-Aulia* (Ch. IX) says about Prophet Rabia : "When she went to the *Haj* second time, she saw that the respected *Ka'aba* was coming to welcome her." It goes on to record : "Hazrat Ibrahim went to holy Mecca....reached Mecca in fourteen years, but he saw no *Ka'aba* there....a voice came saying that it has gone to receive an old weak holy lady." *Tazkara-i-Aulia* (Urdu), Ghulam Hussain and Sons, Lahore, pp. 63-64.

490. The utterance of this hymn by Guru Nanak had nothing unusual about it because the *Hajis* who put these questions to him were especially those who had gone from India and they could comprehend *Sadh Bhakha*. The *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* records that the Guru uttered this hymn in Mecca in response to the questions of *Hajis* there.

None considers *ghee* and silk polluted :
 Such is God's devotee, whatever his caste.
 These in devotion to Thy Name bow.
 Nanak at the door of such begs alms. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 721

When the *Hajis* did not get a clear answer as to whether Guru Nanak was a Hindu or a Muslim, they again questioned him saying that he should reveal the book he used to carry under his arm. They wanted to know whether it was the *Quran* or some other text. They also desired to know whether Hindus or Muslims were good. In response, the Guru said that both Hindus and Muslims would suffer without the noble deeds such as righteousness, truth, etc. The Guru implied that those who do good are good people.⁴⁹¹ Listening to this, the *Hajis* remained silent.⁴⁹²

Guru Nanak and Mardana remained in Mecca for some time. Thereafter the Guru travelled northwards and reached Medina. It is said that Guru left behind his wooden sandals in Mecca and the Makhdum of Uch took these sandals. These wooden sandals have been preserved as a relic in the shrine of *Uch Sharif*.

The real name of Medina is Al-Medina which means a city. The name Medina occurs in the *Quran* and its name prior to Prophet Muhammad was Yasrab. Mecca was a religious place before Muhammad and has been so after him. However, Medina became a religious place only after the death of Muhammad because it was here that Muhammad breathed his last and his tomb also exists there.⁴⁹³

When Guru Nanak reached Medina,⁴⁹⁴ he sat outside the town.

491. Bhai Gurdas versified this dialogue as under :

The Qazis and Mullans go together and ask about righteousness.
 God has enacted a huge drama and none can comprehend it.
 They wanted the Guru to open his book and tell whether Hindu or Muslim
 is great.

Baba told the *Hajis*—

Both of them will weep without good deeds. (Var I, Pauri 33)

492. After that it is said that a dialogue took place with Pir Rukan-ud-din and Pir Patlia. Bhai Vir Singh calls the latter Pir Patnia. That implies he could be Shaikh Ibrahim of Pakpattan with whom the Guru had a dialogue at Pakpattan, but this remains unconfirmed. However, the fact that the *Makhdum* of Multan and *Makhdum* of Uch went to Mecca at the time of Guru Nanak is confirmed. The point whether Shaikh Ibrahim also went to Mecca at that time cannot be ascertained. Similarly, no information is forthcoming in respect of Rukan-ud-din.

493. See "Medina" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

494. The *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* texts make no mention of Medina, but refer only to the Guru's visit to Mecca. Bhai Gurdas says that he went to Medina. The

He asked Mardana to go and pay obeisance to the tomb of Muhammad. Mardana came back after paying his respect there and then he took the Guru also along with him. The Guru also visited Muhammad's tomb.⁴⁹⁵ Returning from there, he stayed in Medina for some time more. Thereafter he set out on his onward journey.

Baghdad

There are two known routes from Medina to Baghdad. One is generally taken by the traders and the other by the *Hajis*. The route commonly taken by the caravans was on the northern side of Medina and passed through Damascus, the capital of Egypt, a town 820 miles (1312 kms) away from Medina.⁴⁹⁶ Then it turned eastwards and reached Baghdad. But *Hajis* generally did not take this route because it was rather long. There was another shorter route connecting Medina and Baghdad. This route passed through Faiz and reached Baghdad direct. This desert-bound route was got prepared especially for the *Hajis* by Begum Zubaida, wife of Caliph Harun Rashid. Arrangements for water were also made at some places on this route.⁴⁹⁷ Faiz was 235 miles (376 kms) off Medina and was the capital of Najad. There was only one very narrow path to reach Baghdad from here which is referred to as "a difficult path" by Ibn Batuta.⁴⁹⁸ Batuta had travelled to Baghdad on this route in A.D. 1326. This route was open in the 16th century. Guru Nanak and Mardana also reached Baghdad through this route.⁴⁹⁹ This route is open even today.⁵⁰⁰

➤ *Bala* and the *Mani Singh* versions also record the Guru's visit to Medina. Medina falls on the way between Mecca and Baghdad. In fact, the direct route to Baghdad starts from Medina only. Therefore it can be surmised that the Guru did visit Medina.

495. These details are available in the *Bala Janamsakhi*. Bhai Gurdas has just mentioned the name of Medina.

496. "Medina" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

497. Percy Sykes, *A History of Explorations*, New York, 1961, p. 86.

498. Ibn Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, London, 1963, p. 80.

499. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records: "Then passing through Kabul, Peshawar and the entire west, Guru Nanak arrived at Gorakh Hatri and Saidpur Saloi." In the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Mani Singh, Guru Nanak is said to have reached Baghdad via Siam and Rum. At the latter place Guru Nanak is said to have met Emperor Karun. It was here that the Guru composed his "Nasihatnama". However, this work does not seem to be the Guru's composition and is not included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. There is no memorial of the Guru's visit anywhere in Jordan and Syria. Thus the idea of the Guru's travel on a longer route is untenable when there was a shorter route available.

500. "Baghdad" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Baghdad is an Iranian name which literally means "a gift given by God." Baghdad is an ancient town. For the last 3000 years, the city has been at this very place and has been known by this very name. Before the discovery of sea-route, Baghdad like Mecca was a centre for the caravans coming from the east as well as the west. The 9th century was the golden period in the history of Baghdad. At that time Caliph Al Mamum, a successor of Caliph Harun Rashid, contributed a lot towards its prosperity. At that time, it was considered the greatest centre of Islam in the west. Its decline started in the 13th century. Halaku Khan destroyed the city in A.D. 1258. In the 16th century it came under the suzerainty of the Turks.⁵⁰¹

At the time of Guru Nanak, Baghdad was under the Iranians. In 1507-08 Safvi Shah Ismail over ran it and he ruled over it until 1524.⁵⁰² Safvi Shah belonged to the *Shia* sect. He visited many mosques belonging to the *Shias* and at the same time felled down several mosques of the *Sunnis* and got their *imams* executed.⁵⁰³ It was a period of great religious crisis in the history of Baghdad.

The city of Baghdad was situated on the bank of the river Euphrates. In olden times it was on the western bank but it got ruined and the new city came up on the eastern bank.⁵⁰⁴ When Guru Nanak visited the city its habitation was on the eastern bank of river.

Guru Nanak and Mardana approached Baghdad and found a place outside the city at a place behind the present railway station for their stay. The place is now a graveyard.⁵⁰⁵ The railway station is on the western bank of the river and is connected with the city by a bridge. Guru Nanak got up early in the morning as was his wont, and he and Mardana started singing hymns (*kirtan*). He recited the following stanza⁵⁰⁶ :

501. "Baghdad" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

502. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 568.

503. Stephens and Hemis, *Iran*, London, 1958, p. 69.

504. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

505. Then Baba [Nanak] went to Baghdad, and made lodgings outside [the city].

One was the Baba, the image of God, and other Mardana, the rebeck-player.

(*Bhai Gurdas Varan, I : 35*)

506. As Guru Nanak had attracted the attention of the people at Haridwar by offering water towards west and at Mecca by sleeping with his feet towards the Ka'aba, here in Baghdad he also attracted the people's attention by this method.

Of the neither worlds and heavens has He created millions.⁵⁰⁷
 Men have given up the attempt in despair.
 The Vedas too declare unanimously *their helplessness*.
 Muslim scriptures declare the number of species eighteen thousand.
Vain is such count : Nothing is real but the One Essence.
 His Infinity no one may measure or state—
 Men's lives are swallowed up in the effort;
 Saith Nanak : Know that He is supreme, all-knowing.

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 5

Some people listened to this melody and there was a sort of tumult in the city because singing was a taboo in Islamic religious code.

The mausoleum of Shah Mohi-ud-din Abdul Qadir Gilani (1077-1108), the founder of the Qadiri sect among the Sufis, was a famous place in Baghdad. This mausoleum was got built by his son who also became his spiritual successor. There was a seven-cornered mosque inside it.⁵⁰⁸ These days the shrine is not in good shape but during the time of Guru Nanak it was a famous place.

According to Brown, several baptismal rites were performed at the time of one's initiation into the Qadiri Sufi sect. They remembered God by seven names, reciting them in a prescribed order. As per the other ritual, the new entrant into the sect would erect thumbs of both of his hands and give his right hand in the right hand of his spiritual mentor.⁵⁰⁹ That is why such a mentor among the Qadiris is called "Pir Dastgir" which means the pir or spiritual mentor who holds the hand. At the time of Guru Nanak also, the person who occupied this spiritual seat in the mausoleum of Shah Mohi-ud-Din Abdul Qadir Gilani was called Pir Dastgir.

When the issue of Guru Nanak's melody became talk of the town, some people went to Pir Dastgir. At that time the son of the Pir Dastgir also stood nearby. So the Pir, his son and these people came out of the town to see this strange faqir.⁵¹⁰ When Guru Nanak and Mardana saw the crowd surging towards them, they stopped the

507. Millions of skies and millions of regions below

[He] showed them all in the twinkling of an eye. (*Bhai Gurdas, Varan, I: 36*)

508. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. I, pp.10-12; also Dara Shukoh, *Safinatul Aulia*, Karachi, p. 84.

509. A.H. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier*, Vol. I, pp. 538-39.

510. Bhai Gurdas has also recorded the meeting of Pir Dastgir with Guru Nanak.

kirtan and became cautious. As they reached near, Pir Dastgir instantly asked Guru Nanak who he was and to which tradition of Islam he belonged. The Guru replied that he was God's man and belonged to none of the Islamic traditions. The Pir said in that case he was an infidel and they would kill him by stoning.⁵¹¹ On hearing this the Guru gave a loud call of *Sati Kartar* [Lord-Creator is True].⁵¹² This astonished the Pir Dastgir and other people. They thought this faqir who sang melodies might be crazy. Pir again asked him why he sang melody when singing was taboo for Muslims. The Guru replied that singing eulogies of God was the food for soul. The prophet has banned the singing of songs which cause evil passions. Someone then asked that he just now sang that there were millions of skies and regions below earth which was blasphemy since Islam believes in seven skies and seven regions below earth. Guru Nanak told them that God's creation is immense and limitless. It cannot be fathomed. Innumerable are the visible and invisible things created by Him. Listening to this, the Pir and his son were highly pleased. They had a dialogue with the Guru and went back. Similarly, other people also returned to their homes.

Guru Nanak and Mardana spent some time in Baghdad. Guru Nanak had discourses with Pir Dastgir and other holy men. At that time Faqir Bahlol listened to the Guru's discourse very attentively and became a disciple of the Guru. This fact has come to light from an epigraph discovered by Ananda Acharya. He has referred to it in his book *Snow Birds*. This epigraph was found outside of the city of Baghdad.⁵¹³ The words inscribed on it were as under :

Here Guru Nanak had a dialogue with Faqir Bahlol. Even after sixty years (sixty winters) of Guru Nanak leaving Iran, Bahlol's soul

511. These details are on the basis of a *Sakhi* in the *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi*.

512. Bhai Gurdas says :

Gave the call after saying the *namaz*, the entire world was benumbed.
 The city was deserted,
 Pir was astonished to see this.
 He saw attentively—
 a faqir, greatly God-absorbed, was he.

513. This information is given on the basis of Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*. Bhai Gurdas records this episode as under :

Pir argues and tells : this Faqir is great.
 Here in Baghdad he has shown a great miracle.
 He gave knowledge of unlimited skies and unlimited regions.

remained stuck to the words of the Guru as a bee remains glued to the flower on which is reflected the light of dawn.⁵¹⁴

This epigraph in Arabic shows that Guru Nanak's follower Faqir Bahlol continued following the Guru's tenets for sixty years in Baghdad. It is not exactly known as to who this Faqir Bahlol was.⁵¹⁵

In the west of Baghdad where Guru Nanak had put up, a raised platform and a tomb are found in a room. It is said that this is the tomb of Bahlol and the platform is the place where Guru Nanak used to sit. The platform is three feet wide and four feet long. Its height is between 2-3 feet. In 1918, the attendant who lived in this shrine was named Syad Yusaf. There is a courtyard in front of the room and plants of pomegranate are grown therein. There is a boundary wall around the courtyard and there is one gate to enter in. On the platform, we come across a writing in Arabic, a free English rendering of which is given below :

Look ! the great God fulfilled the wish. A new building got erected for Baba Nanak. In the construction of this, seven godly people contributed. The date comes to 927 Hijri. The fortunate disciple started new supply of water from the earth.

The date of this inscription is 927 Hijri which seems to be correct. It comes equivalent to A.D. 1520. *Al Sabia* or *Sabian* or *Subi* people lived in Iraq uptill the sixties of the 20th century. They called themselves followers of Guru Nanak.⁵¹⁶ They were natives of Iraq. They lived in the South Iraq. They maintained unshorn hair and beard. They wore Guru Nanak's portrait around their neck. They were mostly goldsmiths by profession. They did not consider themselves Muslims nor did other people in Iraq consider or call them as such.⁵¹⁷

514. Ananda Acharya, *Snow Birds*, p. 182.

515. Sewa Ram Singh writes that Faqir Bahlol was the spiritual successor of Bahlol Dana, and the latter had been a famous Faqir of Baghdad. Sewa Ram Singh, *Divine Master*, Lahore, 1930, p. 156.

516. Diwan Badri Nath, *Iraq : The Land and the People*, p. 61.

517. The Cultural Attache of Iraq in their Embassy in New Delhi told the author that the *Al Sabia* people are not Muslims. Even people of Iraq do not consider them Muslims. According to him, they maintain hair and beard. They consider water as pious.

Dr. Ganda Singh, who remained in Iraq for several years, says that these people consider themselves as followers of Guru Nanak. See "Arab ate Iran wich Guru Dharamvalambi, Subi te Abad" in *Akali te Pardesi*, 25th November 1931.

Guru Nanak spent some time in Baghdad and thereafter travelled farther eastwards.

Iran

The route from Baghdad to Tabrez was commonly traversed. Travelling on this route, Ibn Batuta had taken ten days to cover the distance between Baghdad and Tabrez.⁵¹⁸ Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana also reached Tabrez which was an ancient town of Iran. As a result of earth-quakes it got destroyed several times but was rehabilitated each time. At the time of Ibn Batuta's visit, it was the capital town of Mangols. At the time of Guru Nanak, it was the capital of Shah Ismail.⁵¹⁹

From Tabrez this route passes through Tehran and leads to Mashhad.⁵²⁰ The earlier name of Mashhad was Tus. Both Firdausi and Al-Gazali were born in this city. Guru Nanak also reached Mashhad from Tabrez. This city was a great centre of the *Shia* Muslims. Mashhad literally means the place for martyrdom. Caliph Harun Rashid had suddenly passed away there in A.D. 809. His son came to pay his respects at his tomb in A.D. 819. His son-in-law, Al-Raza, also accompanied him. Al-Raza took some grapes and breathed his last there. The tombs of both are side by side and *Shias* from far off places come here to pay obeisance.⁵²¹

Guru Nanak and Mardana settled outside the city and did not go to the shrine of the martyrs as did all the *Hajis*. This made the city-dwellers anxious to know to which tradition this faqir belonged. They came together to the Guru and asked him if he had faith in Allah (God), Prophet Muhammad and Hazrat Ali. Guru Nanak replied that Hazrat Muhammad was a prophet whose job was to convey the message. He came with a message from God. What is more important is the message he brought and it became all the more important to follow that message. That message exhorted man to worship God. This is the will of God. I also follow this. The people who had come to meet the Guru failed to understand him. They

518. *Travels of Ibn Batuta*, London, 1963, p. 101.

519. "Tabrez" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1966. Begum Zubaida, wife of Caliph Harun Rashid rehabilitated it in A.D. 791 after an earth-quake destroyed it.

520. Sita Ram Kohli and Hari Ram Gupta, *Historical Atlas of India*, p. 15.

521. "Mushhad" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1966.

asked him to go to Pir Abdul Rahman, their spiritual mentor.⁵²² Pir Abdul Rahman was a native of Gurdez and had gone on a pilgrimage to Mashhad.⁵²³ So Guru Nanak, Mardana and those people went to the Pir who told the Guru that all the people here are *Shias* and that they had faith in Hazrat Ali. He wanted to know whether he was a *Shia* or *Sunni*. Guru Nanak replied that the Divine Light shines in all. All the prophets are equal to him. He further told that the same Divine Light pervaded in them and in the entire universe. However, we fail to perceive it because of the predominance of evil and passion. If one eradicates one's ego, it can become visible.⁵²⁴

Abdul Rahman and natives of Mashhad were deeply impressed by the Guru's words. The Guru spent some time in this town and then resumed his journey.

Kabul

Guru Nanak and Mardana set out from Mashhad on the old route in North Iran and reached Balkh, a town in the northern part of Afghanistan. These days Balkh falls in the northern state of Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan. It has since been named Wazirabad. It was situated on a bank of the Balkh river which flows down north and falls into the Amu river 50 miles (80 kms.) down stream from this place. The town perished several time as a result of political ups and downs, but each time it was resurrected soon thereafter. It had got rehabilitated prior to the times of Guru Nanak, in the beginning of the 15th century.⁵²⁵ Guru Nanak and Mardana passed through Balkh and reached Kabul.⁵²⁶

522. This episode is recorded in the *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi*, but is not found in any other *Janamsakhi* text. It seems correct because Mashhad is situated on the old route from Baghdad to Kabul.

523. If we carefully analyse the *Mani Singh* text, we find indications that Pir Abdul Rahman was a native of Gurdez.

524. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi*, Bombay edition, pp. 183-86.

525. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1966.

526. It is on the route connecting Baghdad and Kabul. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* records Guru's visit to Qandhar and from Qandhar he is said to have gone to Kabul. It is not correct. According to the *Attock District Gazetteer*, Wali Qandhari lived in Hasan Abdal and the Guru had met him at Hasan Abdal. The *Bala* text also refers to the Guru's encounter with Wali Qandhari in Qandhar which is not correct. From the geographical viewpoint, the Guru's travel via the northern route from Baghdad to Kabul seems to be correct.

Kabul is today the capital of Afghanistan. It acquired the status of a capital town for the first time during the regime of Babur when he conquered it in A.D. 1504. At the time of Guru Nanak several routes led to Kabul. In the north, a route existed from Balkh, in the south from Qandhar and in the east from Bannu and Peshawar.⁵²⁷

Guru Nanak put up outside the city of Kabul towards Sultanpur side. Here some holy men met him and held a discourse with him. They warned him that this was a land of the Muslims and he being a Hindu must be cautious.⁵²⁸ The Guru replied that the same Divine Light pervades all. God has created all beings in the same mould. However, some of them wear *janeu* while some others got themselves circumscribed.⁵²⁹ Those holy men were deeply impressed by the Guru's words. The Guru spent some time in Kabul and journeyed ahead.

There was an old *gurdwara* in memory of Guru Nanak's visit to Kabul. However, when new construction started in Kabul, the *gurdwara* building happened to obstruct a road. The Afghan government demolishhed this shrine. This *gurdwara* was in the Pan Chowk Jubba in Kabul.⁵³⁰

Peshawar (Gorakh Hatri)

Peshawar was 181 miles (289.6 kms.) from Kabul via Khaibar Pass.⁵³¹ At the time of Guru Nanak this route was rather difficult. According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, this route was opened during the regime

527. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

528. The episode of the Guru's visit to Kabul is from *Mani Singh Janamsakhi*. Although it does not appear in any other *Janamsakhi* version, but Kabul fell on the Guru's route while returning from Baghdad. There is every possibility of the Guru's halt there.

529. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi*, Bombay edition, p. 210.

530. Ganda Singh, *Itihasak Patre*, 1952, Amritsar, p. 48.

531. S.S. Jerret and Jadu Nath Sarkar (tr.), *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1949, p. 406.

Statement by Sardar Kharak Singh, Kuldip Niwas, near Government College of Physical Education, Patiala. This gentleman had lived in the Parachinar area for quite some time. Sardar Bahadur Karnail Singh, Chairman, Railway Board, told me that as he went to this side for survey so as to lay railway tracks, he saw several *gurdwaras* in this region which were in memory of Guru Nanak. The *Bala Janamsakhi* says that Bhai Mardana passed away in the Kuram valley and Guru Nanak took his son, Shahzada, there. According to a local tradition, the place was Shahkot. A shrine stands there in the memory of Guru Nanak and Mardana.

of Emperor Akbar and that the Emperor also made it somewhat easier. That is when Babur conquered Kabul in A.D. 1504 and made it his capital. He invaded India not through Khaibar Pass but through Kuram Pass. He first attacked Kuhar. At the time of Guru Nanak, the route through Kuram Pass was commonly used for journey from Kabul to Peshawar. Guru Nanak also took this route. It is for that reason that we find *gurdwaras* in the memory of the Guru on the banks of the Parachinar and the Kuram rivers. These *gurdwaras* were in place till 1947. Travelling from Afghanistan, there was a *gurdwara* in Peshawar town just near inside the Pakistan boundary. This shrine was also built in commemoration of the Guru's visit. Travelling down from Parachinar, there was another Sikh shrine in Maulana village, 2 or 3 miles (about 5 kms.) away from Parachinar. The tradition of the Guru having stayed in the village was current among the Muslim population there.

At the time of Guru Nanak, Peshawar was called Parashawar. Babur in his *Tuzk-i-Babari* also calls the town by the same name. Heun Tsang writes it Pulusahpulu.⁵³² The town took its modern name, Peshawar, during the time of Akbar. Writing about Peshawar, Abul Fazl says : "Here is a shrine which is called Gorakh Hatri (Gorakh Hatri). Especially the *jogis* visit here." According to Erskine, a huge inn was built in Peshawar at the site of Gorakh Hatri.⁵³³ According to Sir Alexander Cunningham, Gorakh Hatri was an important Buddhist centre. There was also a *peepal* tree, about 100 feet high. The Buddhists considered this tree holy as they believed that Gautma Buddha had sat under this tree. This tree was there till the time of Babur as he went to see it in 1505 A.D. and he makes a reference of it in his *Tuzk-i-Babari*.⁵³⁴

At the time of Guru Nanak it was a centre of the *jogis*, especially the Gorakhpanti *jogis* who resided there as is evident from its nomenclature. When Guru Nanak and Mardana reached this place of the *jogis*,⁵³⁵ *bhandara* (community food) was being served. After

532. *Ancient Geography of India*, Varanasi, 1963, p. 66.

533. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

534. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

535. *Vilayatvali*, Miharban and Mani Singh *Janamsakhis*, all record Guru Nanak's visit to Gorakh Hatri, but the Bala *Janamsakhi* makes no mention to it. However, the tradition of Guru's visit to this place is nearer truth because it was a famous centre of *jogis* on the way from Afghanistan.

the food was taken by all, the *jogis* asked Guru Nanak whether he was a householder or an ascetic. The Guru replied that he was a householder. One of the *jogis* said that as a man given to intoxication cannot concentrate on God, a householder cannot get enlightenment because he is ever engrossed in familial affairs. In reply to it, the Guru said that one cannot become *jogi* by merely getting the ears pierced through and wearing ear-rings.⁵³⁶ The inculcation of the following virtues is a must to become *jogi* :

In thy heart wear thy ear rings; make the body thy patched quilt :
Yogi ! bring under control thy five disciples, making thy mind thy staff.

Thus shalt thou attain true yoga-praxis.

The diet of herbs and roots, make faith in the one Supreme Being without a second. (Pause I)

As by ritual shaving *by the Ganga* is the Master adopted,

We have made the Master our Ganga.

The Lord, saviour of the three worlds,

Thou in thy blindness never hast contemplated.

By hypocritical talk to attract people, is not doubt eliminated.

Should thy mind in the sole feet *of the Lord* be fixed,

Why in greed and avarice dost thou rush along ?

My self ! in uttering the immaculate Lord's Name engage thyself.

Yogi ! what good uttering all this falsehood ? (Pause I)

This body is demented, the self immature—

Thus is life in possessiveness passed.

Nanak thus supplicates :

When *after death* the bare flesh burns, nothing is left but regrets.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 155-56

During his stay at Gorakh Hatri the Guru was one day asked by the *jogis* if he gave importance to the outward symbols. They also wanted to know what kind of *jogi* one ought to be since he did not accept the occult powers. In reply the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Absorption in the word and *the Master's* teaching is my horn;

The world listens to it as it makes sound.

My begging-bowl and pouch is to beg charity of the Name.

Friend ! know, Lord of the universe is ever awake.

The true Lord of earth is He who the earth sustains;

In an instant creation He raises. (I Pause)

536. This dialogue is based on the narrative as found in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*.

Life-breath by water and air is bound;
 Sun and moon are made the great lamps.
 To die and to live has He given the earth to *man*—
 All these boons has *man* forgotten.
 Siddhas, Yoga-practitioners, *Yogis*, wandering mendicants and
Muhammadian Pirs—
 As I meet any such, God's laudation I utter :
 Thus shall my mind serve *Him*.
 Paper and salt in company with *ghee* remain untouched by water;
 So does the lotus.
 Saith Nanak, servant of God : Thus do God's devotees also mingle
 with *mankind*—
 What harm can *Yama* do to them ? —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 877

Listening to this, the *jogis* bowed to the Guru. The place where the Guru sat was marked by a small *gurdwara* which was in existence till 1947. The Guru stayed at this place for some time and then set out for onward journey.

Devastation of Saidpur by Babur

From Gorakh Hatri Guru Nanak travelled via Hasan Abdal and Tilla Bal Gudain to reach Saidpur.⁵³⁷ *Tuzk-i-Babari* makes a mention of Saidpur Saloi. At the time of Sher Shah Suri, the town was named Shergarh. Thereafter at the time of Akbar in A.D. 1582, Muhammad Amin Karori gave the town his own name and it came to be called Eminabad.⁵³⁸ A disciple of Guru Nanak, Bhai Lalo, lived in Saidpur Saloi. When the Guru reached Bhai Lalo's place, he saw that the town he had earlier put up in had been devastated. Houses had been felled down and there were ruins all around. Bhai Lalo who lived on the outskirts of the town told him that the devastation occurred when the Mughals invaded it. The people put up resistance but it was futile. Those who resisted were killed. The Mughals devastated the town and made women and children captives.⁵³⁹ Bhai Lalo also

537. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak arrived in Saidpur from Kabul, Peshawar and Gorakh Hatri.

538. Ganesh Das Vadehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (Ed. Kirpal Singh), Amritsar, 1965, p. 43.

539. The account of devastation of Saidpur is recorded in *Tuzk-i-Babari* as under : The residents of Sialkot surrendered and saved themselves. The residents of Saidpur resisted. They were killed and their women and children were taken as captives. Their houses and other property were looted. Lucas King, *Memoirs of Zahir-ud-din Babar*, Vol.II, p. 145.

told the Guru how the Hindu, Muslim women and children prayed in the hour of crisis. The Mughal soldiers paid no heed and captured them. Guru Nanak listened to this all with rapt attention. He had returned from Mashhad⁵⁴⁰ (a city in Khurasan) and Kabul which was Babur's capital town. He had already heard of Babur's invasion on India. After listening to the plight of Saidpur from Bhai Lalo, the Guru told him that Mir Zahir-ud-Din Babur had conquered some areas of Khurasan.⁵⁴¹ and made Kabul his capital.⁵⁴² Now he has been making repeated attempts to conquer India. He has been responsible for the devastation and ruin of Saidpur. Then the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Lord ! Thy fear is my hemp-drug, my mind the leather pouch.
 Mad in *this* intoxication, an anchorite have I become.
 With my bowl for Thy sight I beg, that I hunger for,
 This ever at Thy door I beg.
 For Thy sight I yearn;
 At Thy door a beggar—pray dole out this charity *to me*. (I Pause)
 Saffron, flowers, musk and gold by all persons *of all castes* may be
 offered.
 The merit of sandalwood and God's devotees is,
 To all they impart fragrance.
 None considers ghee and silk polluted :
 Such is God's devotee, whatever his caste.
 These in devotion to Thy Name bow.
 Nanak at the door of such begs alms.⁵⁴³

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 722

540. The word "Mir" has been used by Guru Nanak for Babur. Among the Afghans, the king is addressed as Mir.

541. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the literal meaning of the word "Khurasan" is "the land of the rising sun." Khurasan of olden times began with Khiwa (Russia) in the north, extended upto the deserts of Iran and Sistan in the south, with India in the east and the deserts of Guz and Gurgan in the west. These days this area is divided between three countries, i.e. Russia, Afghanistan and Iran. The present day Khurasan is an Iranian state in the north-east of that country. Mashhad is its capital. Khurasan of Guru Nanak's times included many parts of Afghanistan although the western parts were ruled over by Iranians.

542. Before Guru Nanak's visit to Kabul, Babur had conquered it in A.D. 1504 and made the town his capital.

543. The *Vilayatwali*, *Miharban* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* record that this hymn addressed to Bhai Lalo was composed at Saidpur. It is included in *Guru Granth Sahib* under *Asa* measure and it has two parts. The first part is addressed to Lalo and the second points towards the discomfiture of the Mughals and the rise of another hero (*Mard Ka Chela*). This shows that the Guru composed this

Guru Nanak saw decline of the Pathans in the devastation of Saidpur. It seemed as if all grace and grandeur of the Pathan regime had ended. At this time the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Where are gone those gambols, stables and steeds ?
 Where the drums and flutes ?
 Where are those swordsmen on chariots;
 Where those warriors in red gowns ?
 Where are those beauties beholding in hand-mirrors their elegant
 faces ?
 All nowhere visible,
 Thine is this world; Thou its Master :
 In an hour dost Thou make and unmake,
 And wealth among people's rivals dost distribute. (I Pause)
 Where are gone those houses, portals, domed halls, mansions;
 Where those elegant residences ?
 Where the couch of luxury and the beauty whose sight drove away
 sleep ?
 Where the betel-purveyors, the chambermaids ?
 All vanished as shadows.
 For wealth are vast multitudes dishonoured;
 Many for this are strayed;
 This without evil-doing comes not, in death it accompanies not man.
 Those that the Creator casts off from Himself,
 Their goodness He first snatches.⁵⁴⁴

—Guru Granth Sahib, p. 418

Guru Nanak put up with Bhai Lalo for some time and then left for Talwandi.

► hymn during the last years of his life when Humayun was receiving a bash from Sher Shah. Here we have given only the first part which the Guru composed at Saidpur.

544. All the *Janamsakhi* texts state that this hymn was composed by the Guru after the Guru had known for certain about the atrocities at Saidpur which is correct. In *Guru Granth Sahib*, this hymn is under *Asa* measure and it has seven stanzas. The first three stanzas that we have quoted here relate to the situation at Saidpur. The next stanzas mention of a heavy battle fought between Mughals and Pathans. This relates to the battle of Panipat fought in 1526 which shows that the Guru composed these lines after the battle of A.D. 1526. Therefore these two hymns given in the episode (*Sakhi*) referred to above seem to have been given their final shape by the Guru at Kartarpur.

CHAPTER 3

Analytical Study of the *Janamsakhi* Tradition - II

Founding of Kartarpur¹

Guru Nanak and Mardana set out from Saidpur and arrived at Talwandi. They stayed there for some time. Bhai Mardana took time to meet his family. The parents of Guru Nanak had by now grown quite old. Therefore, the Guru wished to spend some time with them and other members of the family just like any other householder. However, on a second thought, he took Mardana along and set out from Talwandi. They travelled north-west and reached Lahore. From there they went farther north-east along the Ravi for about 50 miles (80 kms.) from Lahore and set up a camp there.

Guru Nanak liked this beautiful spot on the bank of river Ravi very much. He started living there. In a nearby village lived a *Jat* of Doad sub-caste. He and his wife came to the Guru daily to offer him milk. It is said that with Guru's blessing Doad's family flourished and became prosperous.² It was some time after the Guru settled here, the villagers in the surrounding areas got to know that a holy man, beloved of God who sang divine hymns had established himself there. People from far and near started coming to him. Once a few mendicants came to see him. At that time Mardana was performing *kirtan* :

"O Nanak ! falsehood is shattered—
Only the truth comes out good finally."

1. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* says that Kartarpur was founded after the first *udasi* of 12 years whereas *Mani Singh* version says it was after the south-eastern *udasi*. The *Miharban* text says it was after the journey to Mecca and Madina. Founding Kartarpur after all the long *udasis* seems to be correct because the founding of a village always entails some problems which the Guru could overcome only by remaining present there.
2. As per the *Bala Janamsakhi*, his wife served milk to the Guru.

The verse stirred the inner feelings of the mendicants who began to sing the same verse by playing with pieces of reed. Wherever they went, they sang this verse. Thus, the popularity and greatness of Guru Nanak spread all around.³

When a rich man (*Karoria*) of this region learnt that a holy man had settled in his *ilaga* and that his popularity was increasing each day, he felt jealous. He thought of ousting such a holy man from his territory. When he started for the Guru's camp with this intention, his horse would not move.⁴ The 'expedition' had to be postponed. Next time, when the horse was readied with saddle, but at that very moment some foreign particle fell into the eye of the rich man (*Karoria*). He had to get off his horse. By now he was blinded by his ego. His companions advised him that he had failed in his mission twice. The *faqir* might be some beloved of God, and it would not be proper to harrass him. At first he did not listen all this, but after some time he comprehended it. He gave up all ill-will towards the Guru. One day an idea struck him that he should go and see this *faqir* who is so popular among the masses. Therefore he went to the Guru and felt elated to see him.⁵

There was one Duni Chand another rich man (*Karoria*) of Lahore whom the Guru had saved with his teaching. When he learnt that the Guru had settled about 50 miles (80 kms.) north-east of Lahore, he came to see the Guru and arranged to get a house constructed for the Guru as well as an inn for the visitors.⁶ Thus was founded a new village which Guru Nanak named Kartarpur.

Ajitta Randhawa

The adjoining villages inhabited by people of the same sub-caste are known as *tapa*.⁷ Number of village in a *tapa* is not limited. This

3. The *Vilayatvali* and *Miharban Janamsakhi* versions record the fact of these mendicants singing this verse going from village to village—a fact corroborated by all near contemporary sources.

4. As per *Miharban Janamsakhi*, this *Karoria* was also the chief of the region.

5. This *sakhi* of the *Karori* is found in the *Vilayatvali* and *Miharban Janamsakhis* and circumstantially seems correct. Anybody who wanted to found a new habitation would face such problems those days.

6. Duni Chand *Karori* lived at Lahore and he had received blessings of the Guru. See *Duni Chand Nistara*, Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, and Bhai Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 643 (Patiala, 1924)

7. According to *Shabad-Kosh*, Vol. III (Bhasha Vibhag, Patiala, p. 165), the word

number varies as per the population of that tribe/caste. Kartarpur, the new town founded by Guru Nanak was surrounded by a *tapa* of Randhawas. Opposite Kartarpur on the eastern bank of the Ravi was a village named Pakkhole. Bhai Mula Chona, *patwari*, of this village was the father-in-law of Guru Nanak. In this very village lived Ajitta Randhawa, son of one Hitta Randhawa.⁸ When he learnt that the Guru had settled in Kartarpur, he went to the Guru, sought spiritual light from him and became his disciple.⁹

Teaching Two Muslims

If one crossed the Ravi from Kartarpur and travelled on the road leading to Batala, one comes across a village Jorian or Jourian on the north of this road.¹⁰ A Pathan named Ubare Khan lived in this village. He was a friend of Shaikh Malo, Muslim scholar who had earlier been to Kartarpur to meet the Guru and had felt quite satisfied after having a discourse with him on godly matters. He told Ubare Khan about the Guru and Ubare Khan also went to Kartarpur to see the Guru. Ubare Khan met the Guru and asked him whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. In reply the Guru told him that only God is eternal; neither Hindus nor Muslims are so. Therefore, they should focus their mind on God. The question of being a Hindu or a Muslim was irrelevant. Ubare Khan was pleased with this answer. He fell at the Guru's feet and sought his blessing. The Guru said 'God will bless him.' Thereafter Ubare Khan sought leave from the Guru. There was another peasant in this village Jorian. His name was Abdul Rehman. He felt bad when he learnt that Ubare Khan had begun admiring the Guru.¹¹

► *tapa* means area or region or *pargana*. However, the affinity of its inhabitants who usually belong to the same tribe/caste is its special feature.

8. Even today Dera Baba Nanak has villages of Randhawas around it.

9. As per *Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*, Ajitta Randhawa was a resident of Pakkhole.

10. There is in the Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College at Amritsar a small manuscript (S.H.R. 1445). This mss. titled "Sakhi Ajitta Randhawa," contains details of the dialogue. This *sakhi* is found in the *Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* only. It is not included in the *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* versions. However, it seems correct keeping in view the surroundings.

11. Jorian Chhotian is a small village still in existence nearby Dera Baba Nanak. It seems that the copyists of *Bala Janamsakhi* erroneously spelt it as Jaurian, and the scribes after them popularized this name.

One day Abdul Rehman also met the Guru and asked him what his religion was whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. The Guru replied that the Name Divine was his religion. At this Abdul Rehman further said that the beloved of God had no religion. The Guru again replied that the beloved of God love God. They do not get involved in the controversies of religion and Hindu and Muslim scriptures. The entire creation of God is essentially the same. Both the rich and the poor, the good and the bad all are His creation. The same Divine Light is resplendent in all. We fail to see this Light because of our egoity. Hearing this, Abdul Rehman fell at the Guru's feet.¹²

Bhai Lehna

Before Guru Gobind Singh had fought at what is now known as Muktsar, this entire region was sparsely habited. There were villages at quite some distance from one another. About 7 or 8 miles (13 kms.) north-east of present town of Muktsar, there was a village, named Matte-di-Sarai. There lived in this small village a Khatri by the name of Bhai Pheru.¹³ The family ran a small shop in the village and they were known for their honesty and nobility. Bhai Pheru's wife was Ramo. In 1504, a son was born to them who was named Lehna, Lehna grew up to be a man of religious disposition.

Babur first invaded India in 1504. His second invasion took place in 1519 and the third in 1520. These invasions revived the memories of Taimur's invasion and the holocaust that followed, in the minds of the Punjabis. What happened with the people of Saidpur in 1520 became known to all. Matte-di-Sarai was situated on the route that connected Lahore with Delhi via Ferozepur and Bathinda. Once the Mughals and the Balochis looted this village.¹⁴

12. This *sakhi* is recorded only in *Bula Janamsakhi*. See Piara Lal's *Janamsakhi Patra*, pp. 231-36 (App. 315-18). It is not included in any other *Janamsakhi*. There were quarrels between Hindus and Muslims at that time. There is little doubt that several Muslim learned men or divines had been impressed by clear-cut, cryptic answers of the Guru.

13. *Ibid.*

While the *Jats* of Doad sub-caste and Ajittra Randhawa became followers of the Guru, Muslim notables of the area got alarmed. These *sakhis* indicate that the Guru had to encounter some opposition when he founded Kartarpur.

14. Bhai Kahn Singh says that he was a treasurer with the Chief of Ferozepur. This

Consequently the villagers began to desert the place.¹⁵ Bhai Pheru also took his family along and shifted to Hari-Ka-Pattan, a little distance away from the road but his business did not succeed there. So he crossed the Satluj and the Beas and settled down at Khadur in the modern Amritsar district.

Lehna was married to Khivi. Her parents were also the natives of Matte-di-Sarai. They had three children, one daughter (Bibi Amro) and two sons (Dasu and Datu). When Guru Nanak founded Kartarpur, Bhai Lehna lived in Khadur.

Lehna was a man of religious disposition. He used to go for pilgrimage to Jawalaji every year.¹⁶ The temple of Jawalaji is a volcanic historical shrine in Kangra district. People came from far off places for worship in this temple. Being quite near to Punjab, the people of Punjab plains had special reverence and attraction for this place. There were several routes leading to Jawalaji. One route passed through the Kahlur State and Mandi town before reaching Jawalaji. Guru Nanak had taken this route when he went there (for details, see Visit to Jawalaji). From Khadur, the route to Jawalaji passed through Pathankot. During the Mughal rule, whenever the Mughal army had to go to hill states with a view to realize tributes from the hill chiefs it travelled via Paithan (modern-day Pathankot) and Dhameri (modern Nurpur) before reaching Kangra.¹⁷ The route connecting Khadur and Pathankot passed through Kartarpur, the newly founded town which Guru Nanak had made his abode.

Once Bhai Lehna, along with a group of pilgrims of his region, was passing through Kartarpur. He had once heard a Sikh reciting Guru Nanak's hymns in his village. He had ever since nurtured a desire to meet Guru Nanak. Bhai Lehna persuaded his fellow pilgrims to halt there for some time to see this holy man (Guru's Nanak) also.¹⁸ It should be clear that by this time Nanak's fame had spread far and wide. Lehna met the Guru. He felt as if all his dubiety were gone

fact is not confirmed from any other source. The accounting his having shifted from one place to another also indicates that he was not in the employ of any chief.

15. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, p. 1.

16. The entire village of Matte-di-Sarai got deserted. Thereafter a Nanga (nude) *sadhu* rehabilitated it. That is why the village is now called *Nange di Sarai* or *Sarai Naga*.

17. The *Vilayatnāli* and *Bala Janamsakhis* record only his visit to the *bhawan* (shrine) of the goddess, but the *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* and Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* specially state his visit to Jawalaji, and it also seems correct.

18. J. Hutchinson, *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Vol. I, pp. 140 and 143.

and that the goddess he worshipped remained in the service of the Guru there.¹⁹ When Lehna went to see off his companions, they told him that they had agreed to undertake the pilgrimage because of him and that it did not behove him to leave them on the way. Lehna replied with humility that the purpose with which he used to go to the shrine of the goddess had been realized. You may go for pilgrimage. May God fulfil your aim as well. All the pilgrims were astonished and they went ahead leaving Lehna behind.²⁰

These pilgrims from Khadur went to Jawalaji, but as they returned they again visited Kartarpur. They persuaded Lehna to accompany them home. He replied that he would thereafter live at Kartarpur.²¹ You may inform my family. The pilgrims went back to tell his family that Lehna had chosen to live at Kartarpur and become a devotee of Guru Nanak.

Lehna engaged himself, with full devotion, to the service of the Guru and service in the *langar*.²²

Bura-Budha

Once Guru Nanak set out from Kartarpur and sat at a place now outside the present Kathu Nangal village. This village is 12 miles (19 kms.) to the north of present city of Amritsar. This was a village inhabited by the Randhawa Jats. Outside the village a child was grazing the cattle. He came to the place where sat the Guru. The child met the Guru with due respect and began to talk to him.²³

Guru Nanak asked him that he was in an age-group when children just played and enjoyed, but he talked like a mature man. In reply, the child told that one day his mother asked him to light fire, "he saw that the smaller woods caught fire sooner and the larger

19. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that a Sikh of Khadur recited hymns. Lehna became keen to see Guru Nanak because of him. All the *Janamsakhi* versions say that Lehna met the Guru as he was passing by Kartarpur.

20. *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that Lehna saw the goddess serving the Guru. See *Sakhi* No. 53 (App. 54).

21. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, p. 67, App. 164-65.

22. The *Miharban Janamsakhi* (Vol. II, p. 67, App. 164) records that the pilgrims insisted a lot that Lehna should go back home along with them, but he did not agree. *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* also records that he did not return to Khadur and remained at Kartarpur.

23. *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, *sakhi* No. 53 (App. 53-54).

ones later. At this, I thought that I could leave this world even in childhood. Since then, I started looking for the holy people and serve them." The Guru was highly pleased at this and asked the boy his name. He replied that his name was Bura. Hearing this, Guru remarked that he was mature and full of wisdom. Therefore, his name should be Buddha.²⁴

As this child grew up, he became a Sikh and is known as Baba Buddha in Sikh tradition. He continued to serve the Gurus till the sixth Guru, Hargobind. He was appointed by Guru Arjan the first *granthi* of Harimandar. He died in A.D. 1631.²⁵

The Guru stayed for some time in the village of this child and thereafter returned to Kartarpur.

Achal Vatala

While staying at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak decided to visit *Achal Vatala* at the time of Shivaratri fair. He took Bhai Lehna²⁶ along. Achal is an ancient shrine. It is said that Shiva's son, Kartika, had put up there after circumambulating the earth. An ancient temple and a tank (*Sarovar*) dedicated to the memory of Shiva exist here. The village also came to be known after the name of the shrine, Achal. Being

24. *Bala Janamsakhi* records that the child fetched the bowl full of *ghee* from his home and gave it to the Guru which does not seem correct.

A.H. Rose, (*Glossary of the Castes and Tribes of the Punjab and North-Western Frontier*, Vol.III) p. 320, records this episode differently under the details of Randhawa sub-caste. It says :

"The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi*, sakhi No.39, app.38, records this episode as follows : A child of seven years would come to listen to the *kirtan* daily in the congregation of Guru Nanak. He would silently listen to the hymns and quietly go out. One day the Guru asked that as this child goes out today, he may be detained. At that time the Guru held the above discourse with him."

According to local tradition, when the Guru passed by Kathu Nangal, a village of the Randhawas, this conversation took place. According to Bhai Kahn Singh, Baba Buddha was born at Kathu Nangal, district Amritsar. This village is situated on the Amritsar and Batala road.

25. According to a local tradition, the Guru called Bura by the name of Buddha and thereafter this new name became popular.

The *Bala Janamsakhi* records that Guru Nanak showered many blessings on Baba Buddha.

26. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* says that the Guru arrived at Achal from Sumer Mount, but according to Bhai Gurdas he came from Kartarpur. The *Miharban* and the *Mani Singh* versions also say that the Guru came to Achal from Kartarpur which seems to be correct.

within the vicinity of an important town, Batala, about four miles (6 kms.) towards south it came to be called Achal Vatala. There were several idols around the pool and according to a tradition, they were destroyed during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb. These days there is a temple in the midst of the shrine on which we can see an epigraph of 1911 Bikrami A.D. 1854, wherein it is stated that this temple was got constructed by Ram Dial Bhandari in A.D. 1854. On the circumambulatory wall of the Shiva temple is a painting of Guru Nanak, with *siddhas* sitting reverentially around him.²⁷ This shows that at the time of building of the temple even the saints respectfully referred to the Guru's visit to Achal. On the bank of the pool at a little raised mound is a *gurdwara* and, according to a local tradition, Guru Nanak sat at that very site on his arrival. There is a berry (*ber*) tree inside the *gurdwara* complex which is said to date to Guru Nanak's time. There is a *baoli* adjoining the *gurdwara* which has these days been converted into a well. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had donated land for the *langar* of the *gurdwara* and had also contributed towards the construction of the shrine.²⁸

The fair in Achal Vatala was held annually on the Shivaratri day (February-March). Guru Nanak visited the place on the eve of one such fair. He sat on a mound on the bank of the pool. Many singers flocked to this place, on the eve of the fair and sang verses of *bhaktas*; used to attend Hindu religious fairs. They would sing such devotional verses and please the audience who would, in return, give them *dams* (one rupee had forty *dams*) in reward. Such singers were called the *Bhagatie*.²⁹ When these *Bhagaties* learnt of the Guru's arrival, they also went to him. They knew well that Guru Nanak was

27. It appears that the Guru took Lehna along to different places so as to familiarize him with different traditions. *Miharban Janamsakhi* makes a clear mention of Lehna accompanying the Guru to Achal Vatala. In *Mani Singh* text also the *sakhi* of the Guru going to Achal comes after his meeting with Lehna. Lehna's accompanying the Guru to Achal Vatala can be accepted logically.

28. Bhai Vir Singh, *Sidh Gosti Satik*, Vol. I, Amritsar, Tract No. 1364-593, August 1969, pp. 19-20.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated 150 *ghumaons* of land for the *langar* and an annual *jagir* of Rs.50/- for the shrine. See Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 33.

29. These days this fair takes place on 9 and 10 *sudi* of Kartik. When did the Shivaratri fair stop and when it began to be held on 9 and 10 *sudi* of Kartik is not known. According to Bhai Vir Singh, Emperor Akbar had also gone to Achal Vatala on the Shivaratri fair which shows that till the time of Akbar the fair used to be held on Shivaratri day.

mighty pleased with *kirtan* (singing of hymns) since everybody knew that *kirtan* was performed twice at Kartarpur. So these *Bhagaties* came to the Guru and sang hymns. People also came and sat around the Guru to listen to these devotional songs. The *jogis* who resided in the Shiva's shrine felt highly jealous that all the people had flocked to this newly-arrived *sadhu* and that the site of the fair looked deserted. The *Bhagaties* performed the *kirtan* and whatever offerings were given to them they put in a bowl. With a view to harassing them, the *siddhas* hid this bowl. When the *Bhagaties* did not find their bowl, they got nervous. They stopped singing verses and the people scattered. Guru Nanak told the *Bhagaties* about the place where the *siddhas* had hidden that bowl. They went there and brought back that bowl. At this; the *jogis* felt annoyed. They asked Guru Nanak to engage in a religious dialogue with them.³⁰

The *jogis* who lived at Achal Vatala were Gorakhpantis because in the 16th century disciples of only Gorakh Nath were to be found in northern India.³¹ Among the Gorakhpantis, their basic virtue was to have turned away from the household life. So the first point which the *jogis* raised with Guru Nanak was their complaint against his being a householder. From amongst them Bhangar Nath asked the Guru why he had become a householder leaving aside the robes of an *udasi* (renunciant). It was, as he said, like putting tart in the milk which turns the entire milk into curd. Since the religion of Guru Nanak was to be essentially the religion of householders, in reply the Guru said if mind and intellect are not pious, the Name-milk gets soured. Thus, one should keep a check on his senses even while living as a householder. He told the *jogis* that they lived on the charity given by householders.³²

Then the *siddhas* asked : 'the lady churns the milk so as to get butter out of it but mere churning fails to make butter as a result of which ghee is not made.' They wanted to know if the fault lay with the lady, the pitcher in which milk was churned or in the *ghee* itself. In this symbolic question, the lady stands for the spiritual mentor, the pitcher is the disciple, the milk is knowledge and the *ghee*; union with the Lord. When one fails to attain anything even

30. Mani Singh Janam Singh calls them *Rasdharies*. The *Miharban* version refers to them as singers of *padas* or verses. But Bhai Gurdas mentions them as *Bhagaties*.

31. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, I, 39.

32. H. Wilson, *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 115 and 119.

after performing rituals, who is to be blamed? Guru Nanak and Lehna listened to all this with rapt attention. Lehna who always listened to the utterances and hymns of Guru Nanak with complete concentration, recited the following hymn of Guru Nanak³³:

Tinned copper so bright and lustrous,
 When rubbed, appears a surface inky black.
 Its impurity by washing shall not go, despite washing a hundred times.
 Those are true friends who are one's companions of the way;
 And when their reckoning is called for, instantly render it. (I Pause)
 Chambers, domes and bowers, painted all over,
 When crumbled are little good, *found* deserted within.
 Storks white-robed that at holy spots abide,
 Gripping creatures swallow them—such immaculate cannot be called.
 Like the cotton-wool tree is my body, that deludes parrots.
 Useless its fruit—
 Such are my qualities.
 I the blind man, carrying a *heavy load*, a long mountain-path have
 to traverse.
 Nothing with my eyes can I behold—
 How may I ascend this path to cross?
 What good other devotion, merits and clever devices?
 Saith Nanak: Contemplate thou the Name, whereby from bonds
 mayst thou be freed. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 729

The essence of this hymn was that the body-pitcher can remain worth use only if the Guru helps and only then the appropriate fruit is achieved.

On listening to this, the *jogis* started performing miracles. They also wanted the Guru to perform one. The Guru replied that he had no miracle other than the Divine Name. The *siddhas* did not believe this. They again demanded that he had shown miracles to the world and everybody accepted this fact. They wanted him to tell them the secret of his greatness. The Guru again told them that 'he had no miracle except the Name of True Lord.'³⁴ He reiterated the principles as stated in his *Sidha Gosti* so as to make his motive clear. The Guru seems to have given final shape to the *Sidha Gosti* on his return to Kartarpur from Achal Vatala. The *Sidha Gosti* is the composition which contains answers to questions put by the *siddhas*.³⁵

33. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, I, 40.

34. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 70-71 (App. 166-67).

35. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, I, 42.

When the *jogis* of Achal Vatala heard the discourse of the Guru, they felt peace of mind and they bowed before the Guru and exclaimed 'O Nanak great is thy spiritual attainment.'³⁶ Guru Nanak spent some time at Achal Vatala and then set out on further journey.

Kiri Afghana (Pathana)

Setting out from the fair of Achal Vatala, Guru Nanak and Lehna passed through Batala and went towards the Beas river. They reached the village Kiri Afghana, also called Kiri Pathana, near present town of Sri Hargobindpur. The town of Sri Hargobindpur was later on founded by Guru Arjan. These days the population of Kiri Afghana is a little over 1,000. It falls under Sri Hargobindpur police station. Here some Pathans became disciples of the Guru and would sing the Guru's hymn to the accompaniment of music.³⁷ Here the Guru uttered the following hymn :

Brother ! He who created *beings*, cherishes them too :
 What more *on this* can we say ?
 He who this field has sown, Himself knows and does what is best.
Recite tale of the Divine Beloved, whereby may come everlasting joy.
 (Pause)
The female that with the Spouse had not bliss, into regrets must fall;

36. Bhai Gurdas states in his narration of Achal Vatala that "Baba held dialogue with the *siddhas* which provided peace to the latter." However the name of *jogis* of Achal Vatala which Bhai Gurdas has mentioned such as Bhangar Nath, et.al. are not found in *Sidha Gosti*. Therein are given other names such as Gopi Chand, et. al. *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* mentions that dialogue with the *siddhas* took place at the Sumer mountain. The special narration given by Bhai Gurdas of the dialogue with the *siddhas* makes it clear that the tenets mentioned in the *Sidha Gosti* might have been reiterated at Achal Vatala also. However, the internal evidence in the *Sidha Gosti* suggests that this dialogue did not take place at any specific place. It contains a critique of the *siddhas* rituals and doctrines.
Varan Bhai Gurdas, I, 44.

The *siddhas* uttered good words :
 Great thou art O Nanak and great is thy spiritual achievement.

37. *Directory of Villages*, Gurdaspur district; Director Land Record, Punjab, Chandigarh, 1958, p. 26. Its exact total population is mentioned as 1135.

Vilayatvali Janamsakhi mentions the Guru's visit to Kiri Pathana (see *sakhi* No. 34, App. 32). No other *Janamsakhi* version mentions this visit. But Kiri Afghana not being far off from Achal Vatala and a reference to some Pathans becoming disciples of the Guru in the *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* make this episode an important probability.

As *life's* night passes, must she rub her hands in sorrow,
 And pluck at her hair.
 No time for regrets shall be when this game of chess shall be up :
 Joy with the Beloved shall thereafter be when the turn *to enter human*
incarnation.
 Will again come.
 Such of the happily-wedded wives possess the Spouse
 As to me are superior.
 Such good qualities *as theirs* do I not possess —
 On whom to lay the blame ?
 Of such of the sister-friends as with the Lord have bliss,
 Shall I enquire;
 Their feet shall I touch, supplicate them,
 And thus find the way.
 Saith Nanak : The female that realizes the Ordinance
 Applies the snadalwood paste of His fear,
 And uses magic spells of good qualities,
 The Beloved my attain.
 One that from the core of heart *to the Lord* is united.
 United may truly be called.
 By such desiring and mere chatter comes not union.
 By metal to metal is joind, love to love inclines.
 By realization through the Master's grace is attained apprehension *of*
the Lord.
 With a betel-orchard at home, to the ass is of little value.
 One delighting in fragrance alone appreciates flowers.
 Saith Nanak : Whoever quaffs *amrita*.
 Self-absorbed are his doubts;
 Spontaneously in enlightenment merged,
 The state of immortality he attains. —*Guru Granth Sahib, p. 725*

After a short stay at Kiri Afghana the Guru resumed his journey further.

Bikaner

Guru Nanak and Lehna left Kiri Pathana to travel further southwards. Passing through Khadur and crossing the Beas river, they reached Sultanpur. After meeting Nanaki at Sultanpur, they reached Matte-di-Sarai. This village these days bears the name Sarai Naga. It was here that Lehna was born. There is a *gurdwara* in the village erected in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit.³⁸ According

38. The *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* says that Guru went to Vairowal from Sultanpur.

to a local tradition, the Guru had been to this place. They left the village to reach Sirsa, an ancient town which was earlier known as Sarsauti. It is said that King Saras had built a fort there and founded the village. According to Wasaf, it was an important town of northern India in the 14th century. Taimur had conquered it and later on, after Guru Nanak, it had also been the capital of Rai Kalyan Singh.³⁹ Passing through Sirsa, the Guru reached the Rajputana region.

During the times of Guru Nanak and even in the preceding period Ajmer was most important among the Rajput states. According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, Rajputana included states of Ajmer, Jodhpur, Sarohi, Hadoit or Nagore, Bikaner and Marwar.⁴⁰ Marwar was the main centre of the Rathore Rajputs. In the 15th Century, the sixth son of Rai Jodha, the king of Marwar, who was named Bika (1439-1504), conquered the territory now called Bikaner with the help of his uncle (younger brother of his father) and then in 1485 got a fort erected there and founded a village where now flourishes the town of Bikaner.⁴¹ When Guru Nanak came to this region Bikaner was not a big town. On his way from Sirsa towards Bikaner Guru Nanak reached a town where *Vaishnavites* lived in good numbers. They asked the Guru that there are several ways of serving God and what kind of service or endeavour can help man achieve/communion with God. In reply, the Guru told them that one must consider oneself a servant of God if one wanted to realize Him. We can reach Him only if we learn to live as per His dictates. He recited the following hymn⁴² :

Beautiful is the Lord; beautiful the Master's Word.
 By great good fortune is the holy Preceptor met,
 From whom is obtained the state of liberation.
 Your slave of slaves am I, your servant :
 As you keep me, I abide—your Name ever on my tongue. (I Pause)
 Great is my thirst for your sight—your will to my mind is sweet.
 All exaltation in the Lord's hand lies : by His will alone comes
 exaltation.
 Know not the holy Creator to be far—within the self He abides.

39. Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, 944.

40. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 23, pp. 45-46.

41. Jerret and Sarkar, tr., *Ain-i-Akbari*, pp. 273-77.

42. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. IV, p. 202.

Wherever I look, is He pervasive—how may His greatness be realized ?

Himself He creates and takes away life :

In His glance of grace lies exaltation,

By beholding Him with eye of faith is His greatness realized.

In life is achieved gain, should one the Master's teaching follow :

By good fortune pre-recorded is the holy Preceptor attained.

The egoist ever suffers loss, in transmigration whirling.

How may the egoist purblind, devoid of contemplating Him,

Gain sight of Him ?

Such alone should be reckoned truly born, as to the holy Eternal are devoted.

Such by contact with the Master turn philosopher's stone—

Their light with Divine Light merged.

Those engaged in the task set in the primal hour abide day and night immaculate,

By the Name filled with content, saith Nanak,

To the Lord's feet are such devoted. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 421

These people then fell at the Guru's feet and paid him their obeisance. Thereafter the Guru advanced towards Bikaner. He came accross another habitation of the *Vaishnavites* where they asked him : "where does God reside and how can He be realized ?" In reply, the Guru recited the following hymn⁴³ :

Behold thou the *Lord* immutable in all creation;

In *attachment* to worldly wealth lies much suffering,

Laden with saline earth; hast thou to cross the ocean—

This way shalt thou not get much profit.

Sloka (Guru Nanak Dev)

Capital of the holy Name is wealth inexhaustible, limitless.

Saith Nanak : Holy is such capital;

Blessed the traders therein and blessed the commerce.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1090

Listening to this hymn, these *Vaishnavites* bowed to the Guru. Another group of *Vaishnavite sadhus* met him and asked : "Man is born into this world, spends some time herein and dies thereafter. What efforts should be make to realize God so that his life's mission is successful ?" In reply, the Guru told them that it is by remembering Divine Name that one could realize God. Only some rare persons comprehend the Name, but who does, is freed from all sorrow and

43. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, pp.345-49, App. J.S.P. 134-35.

suffering and gets united with God. The Guru recited the following hymn to make his viewpoint clear.⁴⁴

Awkward is turned man's gait *in old age*; feet and hands unsteady,
 Withered the skin and body.
 Eyes clouded, ears deafened—yet egoist man to the Name has not
 turned.
 Blind man ! what have you achieved after coming into the world ?
 God not borne in heart, nor the Master served :
 You depart after losing even *your capital*. (I-Pause)
 The tongue in joy in God not immersed; ever displeasing *words*
 uttering.
 Those involved in calumniating the holy turn beasts,
 Never becoming noble.
 Rare are those tasting *amrita* delight; such to the holy Preceptor by
the Lord are united.
 As long as is significance of the holy Word not realized,
 Shall Death's torment continue.
 Those that no other door *than God's* know of, attached to God's *sole*
 Portal, are pure.
 By the Master's grace such the supreme state attain :
 Thus states Nanak after deliberation. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1126

After listening to this hymn, these *sadhus* bowed before the
 Guru.

Multan

Guru Nanak set out from Bikaner and reached Uch, then in the Bahawalpur State (now in Pakistan). Shaikh Haji Abdulla of this place had met the Guru at Mecca⁴⁵ and he had passed away in 1526-27.⁴⁶ Passing through Uch, Guru Nanak arrived at Multan.

When the Guru reached Multan, the holy men of the town offered him a bowl of milk filled to the brim.⁴⁷ It meant that there

44. *Miharban* and *Bhai Mani Singh* traditions have not mentioned Guru's visit to Bikaner, *Vilayatvali* and *Bhai Bala* mention it.

45. See *sakhi* "Visit to Mecca".

46. Jerret and Sarkar, tr. *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 417.

47. Bhai Gurdas mentions this dialogue as under :

Baba Nanak set out from the fair (of Achal Vatala) and started for Multan.
 The *pirs* of Multan met him with a bowl filled with milk.
 The Baba took out a jasmine petal from his bag and placed it on the milk.
 (It floated over the milk without spilling it)
 As does the Ganga with the sea. (Var I, Pauri 44)

were already enough holy men in the town and there was no space for any new one. The Guru took out a jasmine petal and placed it on the milk which implied that whatever the number of holy men in the town, the Guru will mix with them as does the river in the sea.⁴⁸ On reaching Multan, the Guru went to the shrine of Baha-ud-din Zakaria. At that time one of the descendants of Baha-ud-din, Makhdum Baha-ud-din was the custodian of this shrine.⁴⁹ He welcomed the Guru. After some time he asked the Guru : "You do not seem to have acquired a spiritual preceptor for divine worship and that you still seem to be wandering." In reply, the Guru told him that the real issue was not to settle down at one place or keep on wandering. The issue at stake was how to remove the ills and realize God. The Guru recited the following hymn to make his points clear to the Makhdum⁵⁰ :

A female with divided heart I come and go, and befriend many.
Such a woman no *true* shelter finds :
How may one separated from her Lord find solace ?
My heart to my beloved Spouse is devoted.
For a moment's glance of grace *by Thee* would I sacrifice myself cut
to bits. (I-Pause)
Of ruined matrimony in the parents' home lying,
How to the Husband's home may I go ?
My neck by grip of demerits clenched,
In separation from the Beloved I pine away.
Should I in the parents' home keep the beloved spouse in mind,
In the in-laws' home would I find lodgement.
In joy sleeps the woman of happy matrimony,
Finding her Lord repository of merits.
Despite quilt and mattress of silk, and fine dresses worn over limbs,
The woman of cursed matrimony cast off by the Spouse,
Her night in suffering passes.

48. The episode of sending a milk-filled bowl is popular with other famous holy men also. Maybe, such an incident was repeated several times. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, when Shah Mohi-ud-Din Abdul Qadir Gilani, the founder of the Qadiri tradition of Sufis, went to Baghdad, the holy men of Baghdad sent a milk-filled bowl to him. Gilani put a rose flower on the milk. The *Multan District Gazetteer* (p. 288) mentions that when Shamas Tabrez came to Multan, the holy men of Multan had sent a milk-filled bowl to him also and that he put a flower-petal on the milk.

49. See *sakhi* "Visit to Mecca".

50. See *Miharban Janamsakhi*, pp.334-37 (App. J.S.P. 143-44). Though this episode is not mentioned in any other *Janamsakhi* version yet the dialogue with Makhdum Baha-ud-din is well placed.

However many the delights that I taste, however, numerous the garb
 I wear—
 Without *love* of the spouse is youth gone waste,
 And ever the cast-off female pines.
 The holy Eternal's call by the Master's teaching hear.
 Holy is the assembly of the Holy Lord,
 And by His glance of grace is *induced* devotion.
 The enlightened have applied collyrium of truth,
 And with that the Beholder *of all* behold.
 By the Master's guidance is acquired enlightenment and knowledge,
 As egoism cast off.
 Such females please Thee as Thy merits share—
 Else many are like me.
 Saith Nanak : Those that in holy Truth are absorbed.
 Never from their Lord are sequestered.

—*Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 1014-15

Makhdum Baha-ud-din was highly impressed by this hymn. He asked the Guru that he (the Guru) had given him a glimpse of God. In reply the Guru told him that he had the spiritual training and attainments of Baha-ud-din Zakaria as his heritage and that he himself was also a spiritually enlightened faqir. Baha-ud-din again said that he (the Guru) was a greater *Pir* who had given him a glimpse of God.⁵¹ Thereafter Guru Nanak started on his return journey to Kartarpur.

Prior to 1947, the place where Guru Nanak sat was preserved in the house of the *pirs* although it was maintained and looked after by Muslims.⁵²

Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani

Leaving Multan Guru Nanak travelled via Dipalpur (now in Sahiwal district of Pakistani Punjab) and reached Shergarh. There lived in Shergarh a spiritually enlightened saint by the name of Daud Kirmani (d. 1574).⁵³ This faqir was a disciple of Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani of Lahore.⁵⁴ When the Guru met this *faqir*, the latter

51. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, p. 438.

52. Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 741.

53. Ahijazul Haq Kadusi, *Tazkara-i-Sufia-i-Punjab*, Karachi, 1962, p. 273. The shrine of Daud Kirmani is still extant in Shergarh and many pilgrims visit it.

54. The *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, p. 182, mentions that 'the Guru held dialogue with Mian Daud, the Pir of Shergarh.

eulogized his mentor a lot during his conversation with the Guru.⁵⁵ The Guru resolved that very moment to meet Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani.

Guru Nanak set out from Shergarh and passing through Chuhnian⁵⁶, Kanganpur⁵⁷ and Kasur⁵⁸ reached Lahore. Here Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani lived on the bank of Ravi river where he had set-up an establishment. Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani's father, Syad Jamal-ud-din, had migrated from Baghdad to settle in Lahore. He was a householder and had three sons—Syad Haji, Sultan Akbar and Gyas-ud-din. He passed away in 942 Hijri/A.D. 1535-36.⁵⁹

Guru Nanak met Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani on the river bank. They sat down together to have a discourse. Guru Nanak said that this world is full of suffering. Abdul Qadir Gilani said that pleasure is in realizing the truth and achieving union with God. Guru Nanak knew this well and hearing this made him emotionally charged. His eyes brimmed with tears and he said that only God is true. Everything else is transient. Real pleasure could be achieved only after realizing God. Guru Nanak recited the following hymn⁶⁰ for Qadir Gilani's benefit :

The Bestower has given to mankind the intoxicant mouthful of falsehood;
Intoxicated with it, death it forgets and in evanescent pleasures indulges.

55. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. I, p. 511 (App. 155) mentions the Guru's visit to Shergarh. Daud Kirmani was a contemporary of Guru Nanak and he lived at Shergarh. The reference to Daud Kirmani in the *Miharban* text is found in Vol. I, p. 182 (App. 178).

56. Both Chuhnian and Kasur are in Lahore district (Pakistan). The real name of the village Chuhni is *Chuhni Pir Kamal di*. Pir Kamal was an enlightened faqir. A blind woman used to serve him. This village was founded in 1536-37 after her name. See Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i-Punjab*, p. 233. At the time of Guru Nanak the village did not exist.

57. Kanganpur is an ancient town which got devastated and rehabilitated many a time. It is 12 miles (19 kms.) away from Chuhnian in Lahore district. It was founded in the 7th century and named after Queen Kangan. During the Pathan regime, a fort was built here and the village was rehabilitated. See *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i-Punjab*, p. 235.

58. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. I, p. 511, mentions that Guru Nanak went to Kasur from Kanganpur.

59. Ahijaz-ul-Kadusi, *Tazkara-i-Sufia-i-Punjab*, p. 359.

60. This episode is based on the *sakhi* titled "Gosht with Pir Abdul Gilani" in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 179-182 (App. J.S.P. 177-78). This episode is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*.

With truth have been endowed the sober ones that they may stay at
the Court Divine.

Nanak ! attach thy self to the truth of the holy Lord,
In devotion to whom lies joy and at the Court Divine Mayst thou
attain honour. (Pause I)

Truth is the wine without molasses, distilled of the holy name.
May I be a sacrifice to all that hear and expound truth.
True inebriation comes when at the Divine Mansion one finds a place.
With water of goodness and the Name,
And fragrance of charity wafted over the self,
Is one's countenance illumined—
More than a million blessings is this sole blessing.
Carry your sorrows to Him alone, who joy can confer.
Why cast Him out of mind who is Lord of self and life ?
Without devotion to Him all wear and all consuming of food is
impurity.
All else is false; what pleases Thee is alone approved.

On hearing this; Syad Abdul Qadir Gilani felt highly pleased
and said that a discourse on the Divine is always satisfying. Guru
Nanak spent some time with him and then returned to Kartarpur.

CHAPTER 4

Light Merges with the Divine Light

Compiling the *Japu*

At Kartarpur, the Sikhs would get up early in the morning and recited the hymns recommended by Guru Nanak. In the evening were recited the *Sodaru* and the *Rahiras*.¹ No particular composition was specified to be recited in the morning. Guru Nanak thought that there should be one specific *bani* for morning recitation as well.² Keeping this in mind, one day he asked Lehna to prepare a composition for recitation in the morning by culling hymns from his works. Such a composition should be complete in itself. The Guru gave all his works to Lehna and desired that out of these stanzas eulogizing God be set apart.³ Guru Nanak put the following at the head of this compilation :

In primal Time, in all Time was the creator;
Nothing is real but the Eternal
Nothing shall last but the Eternal. O'Nanak.⁴

Lehna began selecting the stanzas.⁵ He used to recite these stanzas to Guru Nanak every morning. Guru Nanak would look very carefully at the selection made by Lehna. Thus, one morning Lehna recited thirty-eight stanzas from the corpus of Guru Nanak's entire works. The Guru accepted the selection made by Lehna. When the

1. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, I. 38 (*So Daru* and *Arti* are recited in the evening, and *Japu* in the morning). Both *So Daru* and *Arti* had been composed before the founding of Kartarpur. The *Japu* and other longer compositions of Guru Nanak were composed at Kartarpur.

2. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 248-50.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 125. The exegesis of the last stanzas of the *Japu* made here reveals that the last eleven stanzas given now in the *Japu* were composed by Guru Nanak along side *Sidha Goshai*.

latter recited these stanzas, Guru Nanak would listen to them while bathing. He would also say that eulogies of God are to be sung only after bathing in the morning.

Then Bhai Lehna began arranging these stanzas. He would recite these stanzas to Guru Nanak for getting approval of the order of arrangement. Thus came into being the present form of the *Japu*.⁶ Guru Nanak was highly pleased at this composition of the *Japu*. He said that the *Japu* is meant to be recited at an ambrosial hour in the morning and that every Sikh must read it after taking his bath. That is why Bhai Gurdas has said :

Recited the *Japu*, early in the morning.⁷

Death of Bhai Mula

When Guru Nanak visited Sialkot for the first time, Bhai Mula had met him with great respect. He had also travelled with Guru Nanak for some time.⁸ One day Guru Nanak desired to see Bhai Mula. He took Lehna along and went to Sialkot. On reaching the door-step of his house, they asked about Mula.

Mula's wife saw Guru Nanak coming thither from a distance. She knew well that earlier her husband had left home along with this mendicant and had returned home after quite some time. Apprehending that he might not again go along with this *faqir*, she concealed Mula within the house. She came out and told the Guru that Mula was not at home. Guru Nanak looked askance at her and said, "is Mula really not at home?" She said, "no". The Guru left the house.⁹ After Guru Nanak's departure, Mula came out and asked if the Guru had gone. His wife replied in affirmative. Mula felt saddened at this and fell down. People gathered around but as they touched his body, he lay dead.¹⁰

6. This episode is based on *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 248-50. Although these details are not available in any other *Janamsakhi* but it is evident that Lehna (later Guru Angad) gave this shape to the *Japu* because at the end of 38 stanzas is appended a *Shloka* written by Guru Angad himself (earlier Lehna).

7. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, I, 38.

8. See *Visit to Sialkot*.

9. This episode is based on *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 163-4. This story is not found in any other *Janamsakhi*.

10. Bhai Kahn Singh says that a snake bit Mula in the room where he had hidden himself because of which he died. *Miharban Janamsakhi* records that Mula felt aggrieved

Seeing this tragedy, many people of the town ran after Guru Nanak. They thought that Mula's death was caused by his not meeting the Guru. When people told everything to the Guru, he came back, condoled his death and uttered the following hymn :¹¹

With worshippers of mammon is friendship hollow—
False, false its foundation.
Thou Mula, invisibly death comes,
Not knowing where. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1412

Guru Nanak spent some time at Sialkot and then returned to Kartarpur.

Meeting an Old Friend from Sultanpur

When Guru Nanak worked in the stores of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi at Sultanpur a Khatri of Sultanpur who was also an employee of Dault Khan became his friend. He was well read and was a *Vaishnavite* by faith. The Guru gave up that job and donning the robes of a mendicant travelled far and wide. However, the Guru's friend continued to work with the Nawab.¹² Daulat Khan Lodhi did not want that the Mughals should occupy Punjab. So when Babur went back after conquering Punjab in 1524, Daulat Khan Lodhi came out of the hills and hounded the Mughal forces out of Punjab. The forces of Ibrahim Lodhi were also repulsed when they advanced towards Punjab. However, in 1525 when Babur again invaded India, Daulat Khan suffered defeat. As he was made a prisoner and brought to Sultanpur, he breathed his last.¹³ This happened in the beginning of 1526. After the death of Daulat Khan, his employees dispersed to different places. When the Guru's friend learnt that the Guru had settled at Kartarpur, he came there to see him. On reaching Kartarpur, he listened many anecdotes about the Guru and was highly pleased to meet the Guru. The Guru was also happy to receive him. The memories of the days spent in Sultanpur were refreshed. The old friends sat together and talked for some time.

➤ at Guru Nanak's return, fell down and died. *Miharban* version seems correct as Mula had earlier written on a paper "Death is truth and Life falsehood" and had remained in the Guru's company. His regret at the return of the Guru was natural.

11. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 164-165.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-237

13. Lucas King, *Memoirs of Zahir-ud-Din Mohammad Babur*, Vol. II, p. 172.

One day the friend asked when a trader sets out of his home and returns after a profitable deed, he tells his friends as to how and wherefrom he bought his wares and how he earned the profit. You have earned such fame. How did you do that? At this, the Guru laughed and uttered the following hymn:¹⁴

On whomsoever the immortal Name by the holy Preceptor is
conferred.
Is rendered holy.
One in heart bearing the holy Name, no scattering of the mind's
faculties feels—
Day and night with the Beloved *Lord* is his association.
Lord! under Thy shelter keep me ever :
By the Master's grace have I obtained Divine joy,
Blessing of the Name and the Nine Treasures. (Pause I)
Whoever devotion to the holy name has made his ritual performance.
To such am I ever a sacrifice.
Those dyed in the Divine Lord find acceptance.
In their company is obtained the supreme treasure.
Blessed is the woman who has the Lord for Spouse,
And who by contemplation of the Word in the Lord's love is dyed.
Such a one liberated herself, liberates too her associates and family—
In service to the holy Preceptor the Divine Essence *ever* contemplating.
The holy name is our caste-pride and honour;
Holy devotion our ritual acts and discipline.
Saith Nanak : One effacing duality and *with the Lord* uniting,
Is liberated, none barring his way. —*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 353

Listening this hymn, the friend bowed before the Guru. Thereafter, he stayed for a few days at Kartarpur and then returned to his home.

Lehna's Service

The Guru made vast tract of land cultivable around Kartarpur. The Sikhs who came to the Guru would go to the fields and worked there along with him. They sowed the crops and hoed the fields. Thus the crop the Guru harvested helped in maintaining the *langar* for the mornings and evenings. During a season, there was no yield. Consequently parched gram began to be served in the *langar*. These

14. This is based on *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 235-37.

days whosoever Sikh came to the Guru, he would hand over to him a shovel or hoe and advise him to work in the fields. Thus the faith and commitment of the followers were put to test.

Sikhs from far and wide flocked to Kartarpur, and usually stayed there for a few days. But when the Guru started sending all his Sikhs to the fields, many of them would return soon. Lehna remained with the Guru throughout this period. He would work in the fields and also served the visiting Sikhs. The Guru had asked Lehna several times that he should go back home, but Lehna did not waiver in his resolve to serve the Guru and remained steadfast in his devotion to the Guru. This left a deep impress on the Guru. In the series of tests that Lehna had to pass through, this was his first test.

Death of a Friend of the Guru

While the Guru lived at Kartarpur, one of his old friends came to see him. He was pleased to see the Guru. The Guru gave him much respect and kept him as his guest for 4-5 days. This friend of the Guru was highly impressed by the way of life followed at Kartarpur. The Guru would get up early in the morning, the congregation met and recitation of the Divine Name went on. Any Sikh who came to see the Guru would say "*Kartar Kartar*" (Creator-Lord Creator-Lord) instead of bowing at his feet. In response the Guru uttered "*Sati Kartar*" (True is the Creator-Lord). Similarly, when two Sikhs met each other, one would say "*Kartar Kartar*" while the other responded by saying "*Sati Kartar*".

The Guru's friend went back home after spending five days at Kartarpur. So he sent for all his children and began to share with them his experiences at Kartarpur. While doing so, he breathed his last. His sons came to Kartarpur to convey this sad news to the Guru. The Guru uttered the following hymn (*Sloka*) to provide solace to the grieved souls:¹⁵

Nanak, the heap of dust has fallen; wall of dust that it was.
Within it was settled thief of the foul mind;
Its life was all falsehood. —Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1245

The Guru taught that this body is a lump of earth. If the breath

15. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II (*Pothi Chaturbhuj*), pp. 564-65.

comes, it functions, otherwise it is dead. Listening to the Guru's words, they felt solace and went back.¹⁶

Pontificate for Lehna

Lehna greatly impressed Guru Nanak after his arrival at Kartarpur. The Guru also kept Lehna with him for many years. People belonging to several traditions came to the Guru at Kartarpur.¹⁷ The Guru's daily interaction with them touched his inner feelings. Lehna would listen to the Guru's utterances. When Lehna compiled the *Japu* on a directive from Guru Nanak,¹⁸ it was not only a test of his understanding of the Sikh doctrine but also the test of his faith and commitment.

It was winter. One day it rained heavily to the accompaniment of strong winds. Guru Nanak went to the Ravi for his morning bath. Lehna was also with him. As the Guru entered the Ravi, he remained in meditation for some time and came out of the river some-what late. Lehna remained standing on the bank. The rain and cold winds made him ill with cold. He could bear the cold no longer and fell unconscious on the river bank. As the Guru came out of the river, he was surprised to see Lehna lying unconscious. Somehow, he made Lehna stand up, and took him home. He was wrapped in warm clothes. After some time Lehna regained consciousness. The Guru felt pleased with Lehna's dedication.¹⁹

While living at Kartarpur, one day Bhai Lehna came to Khadur to meet his family, but returned to Kartarpur soon. On his arrival, he learnt that the Guru was away to the fields working there. Bhai Lehna went to the fields. On reaching there, he saw the Guru tying

16. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II (*Pothi Chaturbhuj*), pp. 564-65.

17. *Miharban Janamsakhi*, Vol. II, pp. 144-45, says: "To Baba Nanak came the enlightened ones, ascetics, who are indifferent towards the worldly affairs or who had renounced the world and kept shaven heads, the Vaishnavites, celibates, *jogis*, *Digambar* Jains, *sannayasis*, *tapasvis*, those who lived on milk alone, are given to meditation, rebeck-players, *siddhas*, *sadhus*, *faqirs*, the great god-men, *aulia*, *gaws*, *ulema*, the ones given to polemics, *pirs*, prophets, Hindus, Muslims, householders, princes, peasants, *hath yogis*, *Khatris*, Brahmins, Vaishyas and Shudras, the virtuous poets, singers, etc. etc.

18. See episode on 'Compiling the *Japu*', p. 223.

19. This episode is based on the *Miharban* version, Vol. II, pp. 144-45. It is not found in any of the other *Janamsakhis*. But all accounts agree that Lehna was put to severe tests before being named as successor by Guru Nanak.

a bundle of fodder that was extremely wet and muddy. Bhai Lehna went ahead and bowed at the Guru's feet. He took hold of the bundle and putting it on his own head came home. When the Guru's consort, Mata Sulakhani saw Lehna carrying a bundle of fodder on his head, she realized that the clothes of Lehna had got soiled with the muddy water coming down from that big bale. She told the Guru that this gentleman came to see you and you have made him carry the burden of fodder. Now see how the new clothes of Lehna have got soiled. The Guru smiled and remarked that was not mud but saffron."²⁰

Guru Nanak seems to have put his sons also to test while living at Kartarpur, but they failed to come up to his expectations²¹ whereas Lehna emerged as pure gold from each test.

One day Guru Nanak set out from his home. The Guru was in an irritant mood. He asked the Sikhs to leave him alone. Many of the Sikhs went back as per his command. Walking ahead, the Guru reached a forest. There, he again exhorted his few followers to go back. All the Sikhs following the Guru except Lehna returned morose. Thereafter, the Guru saw a dead body lying in the forest. He ordered Lehna to eat it. Lehna as always, got ready to obey the Guru's command. He simply asked the Guru from which side he should begin; head or toe.²² As Lehna went towards the feet of the corpse, the Guru himself lay between the two.²³ Lehna's test was complete. The Guru said to him, "You are a part and limb of my body. From now onwards you shall be addressed as Angad." Both of them returned to Kartarpur.

The Guru had a premonition that his end was not far. So he gathered together all members of his family and the *Sangat* of Kartarpur. In the presence of them all, he put five paise before Angad and bowed before him. At the same time, he handed over the

20. This episode is found mentioned in *Vilayatwali*, *Bala* and *Mani Singh* versions of *Janamsakhis*. See App. 54, 327, 385 I.S.P.

21. Although *Vilayatwali* and *Miharban* texts make no mention of it, but the *Var* by Satta and Balwand as included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, makes allusions to it, e.g. "The Sons did not keep promise." This shows that the Guru might have tested his sons also. We find several instances of Guru's sons not giving full attention to Guru's wishes in *Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* as well. See the *Mani Singh Janamsakhi*, p. 580, App. 398-9 J.S.P. and the *Bala Janamsakhi*, p. 265, App. 327, J.S.P.

22. This information is recorded in *Vilayatwali*, *Bala* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*.

23. *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* records that as Lehna lifted the sheet of cloth, he saw Guru Nanak himself lying beneath it.

collections of his hymns (*Bani*) to him.²⁴ Angad was quite humble. He stood with folded hands. Now the Guru asked him, "O man ! now realize your true self and ask for something." Guru Angad replied, "A good rapport with congregation, those who have broken away should come back." Guru Nanak replied, "I forgive all because of you." On listening these words, Guru Angad fell at the feet of Guru Nanak.

Light Merges with the Divine Light

Guru Nanak lived his worldly life for more than seventy years.²⁵ He passed away on *Assu Sudi 10, Samvat 1596*, i.e. 23rd *Assu Samvat 1596* or 22nd September 1539.²⁶ The Guru's family including his wife and two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhami Das, were then present at Kartarpur. The right to perform the last rites conventionally lies with one's family. So any quarrel as recorded in some *Janamsakhis*; between the Hindus and the Muslims, on this count does not seem likely.²⁷

24. *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* (Sakhi No. 57) says : "The *pothi* containing all the hymns that the Guru had composed, was given to Guru Angad." This is also confirmed by the hymns in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The hymns of Guru Angad are similar to those of Guru Nanak at several places, e.g., the couplet and the stanza (No.22) in *Asa di Var*. The couplet is by Guru Angad whereas the following stanza is by Guru Nanak :

Couplet by Guru Angad :

If the servant serves the Master, but retains
His pride... (it is all useless)

Stanza by Guru Nanak :

If the servant serves the Master and
Acts on the will of his Master... (he gains everything).

All these details are taken from *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*. Although these details do not tally with any other *Janamsakhi* version, but they carry the flavour of live facts.

The fact regarding the Guru placing five paise and coconut before Bhai Lehna and then bowing before him is mentioned in *Mani Singh Janamsakhi* as well.

25. According to Bhai Karam Singh, his age was 70 years, 5 months and 3 days. See Karam Singh, *Gurpurab Nirnay*, p. 57.

26. Both *Vilayatwali* and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis* give this date. The story of the Guru's passing away is not included in *Miharban* and *Bala Janamsakhis* (mss. A.D. 1658) texts.

27. It is said that a quarrel arose between the Hindus and the Muslims as the Guru passed away. The Hindus said that the Guru's body be cremated whereas the Muslims said that it be buried. The reference to this quarrel is found in *Vilayatwali* ➡

It is said that a *samadhi* was built at the place where the Guru's body was cremated. The same was washed away by the waters of the Ravi. Likewise, the town founded by Guru Nanak was also washed away by the Ravi.²⁸ At the place of that town now stands only the Kartarpur Gurdwara. This Sikh shrine was saved by the Maharaja of Patiala and other Sikhs in 1870 by erecting a *bandh*.²⁹

Dharam Chand grandson of Guru Nanak and son of Baba Lakhmi Das, took some ashes from the site of the *samadhi* and got a new shrine Dehura Baba Nanak, constructed on the eastern bank of river Ravi where the river water did not cause erosion. Around this place came into being a town which came to be called Dera Baba Nanak. During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign, the descendants of Guru Nanak resided there. Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated enough land to the *gurdwara* (*Darbar Sahib*) which still stands in its name.³⁰

and *Mani Singh Janamsakhis*, and not in the *Miharban* and *Bala* versions. The earliest reference to this quarrel is found in the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* which was written during the time of Guru Hargobind. It was also during this time that the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* was written. In the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, we find a mention of a similar quarrel among the Hindus and Muslims after the death of Kabir. See David Shea and Anthony Troyer, *Dabistan, School of Manners*, Paris, 1843, Vol. II, p. 191.

28. The Ravi has been changing its course for several centuries. Sujan Rai, *Khulasat-Tawarikh*, says that Batala town was also washed away by the river. The residents raised a new township at another place and called it Vatala or Batala which, in Punjabi, means 'to change.' However, this happened much before Guru Nanak. In A.D. 1397, the Ravi flowed in the south east of Multan and 28 miles (45 kms.) away from Multan town towards the south where the Beas merged with the Ravi. This was the position until the 18th Century when both the Ravi and the Beas changed their courses again. According to Muhammad Latif, in A.D. 1661 the Mughal government of Emperor Aurangzeb erected a huge *bandh* to save the city of Lahore from the Ravi. The ruins of this *bandh* can still be seen towards the north of Lahore.

29. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 8.

30. Bhai Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 486.

Appendices

Glossary of Historical Names in the *Janamsakhi*

Ajodhan	Pakpatan (now in Pakistan).
Asa Des	Assam : Ancestor of Ahoms 'Samunder' has been misread by Dr. MacLeod as Sham Sunder.
Avantipura	Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.
Daud Kirmani	A famous faquir of Shergarh who met Guru Nanak. He died in 1574 A.D.
Dipalpur	Modern Sahiwal town in Pakistan.
Gorakh Hatri	Peshawar (in NWFP in Pakistan).
Karun Des	Kamrup—it was an independent kingdom separate from Assam in 16th century.
Kauda Rakash	A member of Kedam tribe—a cannible tribe—that lived in the Nilgiri Hills.
Kirhgram	Bairnath (Himachal Pradesh).
Makhdum Bahavadi	Baha-u-din, a descendant of Baha-u-din Zakaria of Multan. He met Guru Nanak at Multan.
Mallu Khan and Ubare Khan	Both lived in Jeorhian, Tehsil Batala, District, Gurdaspur—both came to see the Guru.
Partaprudradeva	A raja of Orissa who met Guru Nanak.
Prayag	Allahabad in U.P.
Shaikh Brahm	Shaikh Ibrahim, Farid Sani who met Guru Nanak at Pakpatan.

Shaikh Tatiyar/ Shaikh Tahir	Also known as Shaikh Idul Kabir. He was successor of Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din of Panipat.
Sumer Parbat	Kailash mountain in the Himalaya.
Syedpur or Saidpur	Modern Eminabad District Gujranwala (Pakistan).
Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani	He lived in Lahore on the bank of river Ravi. He met Guru Nanak and died in 1535-36.
Talwandi Rai Bhoe	Now Nankana Sahib, District Shaikhupura (Pakistan).
Thanasari Des	Thanasari valley in Assam. There is a Thanasari river also.
Tulamba	Makhdumpur District Multan (Pakistan).

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